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Woman Suffrage in Mexico

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Señora Amalia de Castillo Ledón
Most prominent feminine champion of political rights for Mexican women

WARD M. MORTON

Woman Suffrage in Mexico

University of Florida Press
Gainesville-1962

To Roberto and Dorotea

A University of Florida Press Book

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Foreword

THIS BOOK PRESENTS NEW INSIGHTS into an area of Mexican history heretofore not studied.

We must signal out the importance of untying knotty traditions that have stretched far beyond our colonial times. Woman's political life, in respect to man's, varies not only in the newness of the official recognition given her as a citizen, but also in the important consequences of her simple franchise.

Feminine action by its very nature acquires a sense of highly important security in both public and family life. Such a concept of values will be reflected naturally in the daily home duties, in the life of the offspring, and even in the activities of the husband. Relationship with the latter will have to acquire a non-equal progression of mutual intimacy.

Those of us who know our national history cannot in conscience deny the profound impact that women have had in all the historic aspects of our national life. There is daily increase in the number of women whose personal efforts affect the political, economical, social, and cultural life of Mexico. We cannot overlook, either, the fact that not all women are the same. But when we refer to the women of Mexico, we are including all of them, from the most humble and even the poorest mother to the best educated and well-prepared lady, whose very training is another new asset to the welfare of the country.

It is very possible that these cultural differences have been, previous to the concept of woman's equality in political life, points of difficulties and heated discussion—as will be seen in the pages ahead. But it must be understood, too, that similar discussions do occur in men's groups.

In the crucial events of our history, such as the Conquest, the Independence, the Reform, and the Revolution, many women played important parts. But such an awareness by the political conscience has become more noticeable only as chronology approaches our times. No previous event has better shown the major importance of the feminine role than the Revolution of 1910.

Apparently three phenomena have worked simultaneously: on the one hand, women have shown greater interest in political life and their efforts have left deeper imprints thereon than at any other time; and on the other, man has become accustomed to women working by his side in an effort to solve the same national problems. Lastly, woman has on her own acquired the sense that certain activities in public life do not in the least alter her noble femininity. It is perhaps this last concept that revolves within itself and prompts her into greater political living.

Focusing a study on this theme as a "case history" has its advantages and disadvantages. As we lose general perspectiveness in the larger frame of national and world history and in all the many gigantic problems therein involved, we can nevertheless in Dr. Ward M. Morton's book single out in clear outline the efforts and the successes of woman in our national history.

CARLOS BOSCH GARCÍA

Preface

THE "CASE-STUDY" form in which I have presented this account of woman suffrage in Mexico has the advantage of tracing one subject through all its various aspects. In politics, case studies have the purpose of showing a political system in motion. They inhabit that halfway zone between formal studies of government and systematic statements of political theory and depend heavily upon both without invading the realm of either. Case studies record events in the field of practical politics where politicians make and enforce political decisions. They must be bound closely to a chronological frame because the order of sequence has great importance. In tracing out this chronological development the political scholar almost inevitably will find himself pursuing his subject through every aspect of the political and governmental system: the constitution and its amending process, the territorial distribution of powers, the legislative branch, the executive branch, the courts, political parties and elections, and public opinion. The result can be a clearer picture of how the political system actually works than a more formal study of theory or of machinery can accomplish, because one is bound to a presentation of the framework of government and the other to a logical statement of political philosophy. The reader must judge how fully I have been able to realize the potentialities of this method of presentation.

In the meantime some acknowledgments are very much in order. Anyone who writes a book soon finds himself heavily indebted to a large number of people. He is obligated to the institution for which he works for not checking up too closely on how he spends his time, to his immediate boss for conniving with him in snatching hours

from institutional routine, to friends for encouragement and advice, to librarians for help in locating and securing the necessary materials, to the patient anonymous readers who plod through the first painful versions, and not least to his family for protecting him against those two implacable tyrants, the telephone and the doorbell. All these debts I gratefully acknowledge. Some debts, however, reach such proportions that only a personal acknowledgment can serve as partial payment. First mention must go to Dr. Orville Alexander, Chairman of the Department of Government at Southern Illinois University, for continued encouragement and for sparing me as much as possible from routine assignments. Miss Nettie Lee Benson, Librarian of the Latin American Collection of the University of Texas, has been most helpful by providing space and facilities for research and supplying photostatic material. Mrs. Helen Claggett of the Hispanic Law Division of the Library of Congress and Dr. Arthur Gropp of the Columbus Memorial Library of the Organization of American States helped me with the location of essential materials and provided photostatic copies of other necessary items. Dr. A. W. Bork of the Latin American Institute of Southern Illinois University, who read the whole text for factual accuracy and textual correctness, aided in the elimination of numerous errors. Dr. A. Curtis Wilgus of the University of Florida School of Inter-American Studies provided indispensable encouragement and advice, particularly in the final trying stages of preparing the manuscript for publication. Señora Amalia de Castillo Ledón graciously furnished the photograph which adorns the frontispiece, while the excellent picture of the late Señora Jiménez de Palacios, which decorates the text, was the gift of Señora Consuelo C. de Rodríguez of Mexicali.

WARD M. MORTON

Carbondale, Illinois

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Chapter 1

WOMEN OF THE WORLD, ARISE!

WOMAN SUFFRAGE is a recent issue in Mexican politics. The traditional lack of concern about political rights for Mexican women was the reflection of a society hardly conscious that such a problem existed. Mexican politics had always been essentially a masculine activity; even among men it was the concern of a small politically active group in which the vast majority took little part. The activities of Mexican women had always been confined mainly to home, family, and Church. To be sure, Mexico has had its share of active and courageous heroines to play vital and dramatic roles at every stage in its crisis-filled history, but until recently neither men nor women seriously considered the possibility of women participating equally with men in national politics. The nineteenth-century feminist movements in Europe and the United States produced only faint echoes in Mexico. No Mexican counterparts of Susan B. Anthony or Mrs. Henry Fawcett emerged in Porfirian Mexico to attract a great national following and lead a crusade for women's rights to the accompaniment of dramatic and even scandalous headlines in the newspapers.

The Constitution of 1857 did not explicitly exclude women from voting and holding office, but the election laws restricted the suffrage to males, and in practice women did not participate nor demand a part in politics. Señorita Manzanera del Campo, in a recent study of political rights, correctly summed up the viewpoint of politicians under the 1857 charter: "It is indisputable that the attitude of the legislature under the Constitution of 1857 was one of indifference with respect to the feminine element of our country."[1] Early in the reign of don Porfirio a few small socialist journals

began to make timid suggestions about women's rights. In 1878 one of these, *La Internacional,* published a 12-point program, point seven of which advocated "the emancipation, rehabilitation, and integral education of women." Women were admitted to some of the very excellent institutions of higher learning which emerged during the Díaz regime, so that by the turn of the century a small number of outstanding women participated in the professions of law, medicine, and pharmacy and a larger number in the teaching profession. In these professions, according to Daniel Cosío Villegas, "to the general surprise of all they performed effectively labor previously regarded as reserved to the masculine sex." In 1904, a writer, Laura N. Torres, founded a society called "Admirers of Juárez" to diffuse ideas about women's rights, but it seems to have aroused more ridicule than support.[2]

The Revolution of 1910 produced the first serious break in the wall of custom and indifference which shut off Mexican women from political rights and activities. Francisco Madero had absorbed liberal sentiments in Europe, which included an interest in improving the status of women. The influence exerted on him by his wife and by his personal secretary, Soledad González, unquestionably enhanced his interest in women's rights. Soledad González, one of a group of orphans adopted by Madero, became an excellent typist and stenographer. She went with Madero to Mexico City where her ability and intelligence soon gained attention. Later, she became secretary to other prominent politicians.[3] Madero, however, was unable to do anything effective in promoting women's rights because his term in the presidency was brief and insecure. Carranza, in his campaign for the conquest of power following the overthrow of Madero, also demonstrated some interest in women's rights, possibly due to the influence of his private secretary, Hermila Galindo, who was one of the early champions of women's rights in Mexico. In the "Additions" to the Plan of Guadalupe, published in Veracruz, December 12, 1914, Carranza included "revision of the laws relating to matrimony and the civil status of persons" among the imposing list of reforms promised in this famous proclamation. In fulfillment of this pledge Carranza issued the Decree of December 29, 1914, legalizing divorce under certain circumstances; and in January, 1915, he had the Civil Code of the Federal District and the Territories amended to correspond to this

decree.[4] Women, however, continued to be legally inferior to men and entirely without political rights. The Carranza reforms changed the legal status of women slightly and their political status not at all. It was a very small beginning, but nevertheless a beginning.

World War I did much to advance the cause of women's rights because of the increased feminine participation in national life demanded by wartime activities in the nations involved. It resulted in an upsurge of demands for women's rights in Europe and the United States which produced an echo in Mexico. Carranza permitted Hermila Galindo to spread feminist propaganda in Veracruz, Tabasco, Campeche, Yucatán, San Luis Potosí, Coahuila, and Nuevo León. According to Señora Sáenz Royo, Félix F. Palavicini, then Subminister of Education in the Constitutionalist government with its headquarters in Veracruz, called a meeting of teachers in March, 1915, at which

> Hermila Galindo ascended the tribune to make known the ideas which she held in defense of women and with beautiful phrases and concepts no less beautiful she spoke of the great power of feminine sentiments and of the influence which Mexican women were exerting in order to bring about the triumph of the cause of the people, the Constitutionalist cause.[5]

In September, 1915, after the Constitutionalist government returned to Mexico City, Hermila Galindo, Artemisa Sáenz Royo, and others founded the feminist magazine *Mujer Moderna,* which supported the cause of women's rights until it ceased publication in 1919.

Hermila also persuaded General Salvador Alvarado, the Constitutionalist governor of Yucatán, to permit the holding of Mexico's first International Congress of Women at Mérida in January, 1916. More than 700 delegates attended the congress, heard reports about the progress of women in other countries, adopted resolutions urging the protection of women and children, but produced no permanent organization nor any concerted effort in favor of political rights for women. Hermila, by this time Señora Galindo de Topete, could not attend, but sent a written message entitled "Women in the Future," which furnished the dramatic high point of the congress. The message made a strong appeal for women's rights and aroused considerable opposition. Señora Galindo T. subsequently defended

herself vigorously in the columns of *Mujer Moderna* against the storm of protest which her feminist propaganda had produced.[6] The campaign for women's rights in Mexico had achieved only these very modest gains by the time of the calling of the Constitutional Congress in the winter of 1916.

Chapter 2

WHO SPEAKS FOR THE WOMEN OF MEXICO?

CARRANZA DID NOT specifically exclude women from voting in the elections for deputies or from membership in the Constitutional Congress called to meet in the provincial city of Querétaro in December, 1916, and January, 1917. In the Decree of September 14, 1916, however, he restricted candidacy to those eligible to run for deputy under the Constitution of 1857, which included qualification as an elector under a national electoral law which limited voting to males. The Decree of September 19 set the election date for Sunday, October 22, and authorized all those persons to vote who "are considered residents of the states qualified to vote for Deputies to the Congress."[1] Under these provisions women did not vote nor offer themselves as candidates for deputies to the Constitutional Congress, which opened with an all-male cast in Querétaro in December. The Congress gave no serious consideration to political rights for women although it did write into the Constitution important rights for workingwomen. Article 123 of the new charter entitled workingwomen to childbirth benefits, to protection against nightwork and against certain types of heavy and dangerous labor.

Señora Hermila Galindo de Topete, who had just returned from a special mission to Cuba, at once dispatched a plea to the Constitutional Congress to grant political rights to women. She asserted that women had participated actively in the Revolution, inspired by the same revolutionary hopes which animated the members of the Congress.

> The nation and the world are dependent upon your labors, gentlemen Deputies, and I have great hopes for this new code

> in which will be reflected your patriotism and sense of justice as popular representatives, forming yourselves into political parties with legitimate aspirations but without personal selfishness in order that the woman who has not been excluded from the active part of the revolution will not be excluded from the political part and, consequently, will achieve from the new situation, rights, which even though incipient, will put her on the path toward her own advancement, from which will flow the advancement of the fatherland.[2]

Despite the receipt of this and some other resolutions in support of woman suffrage, the Congress did not change Articles 34 and 35 of the proposed constitution submitted by Carranza, which merely repeated the provisions of the same articles in the Constitution of 1857. Article 34 qualified as citizens all married residents of the Republic 18 years of age or over and all single residents 21 or over. Among the prerogatives of citizenship Article 34 established the right to vote, to run for all offices filled by popular election, and to participate in political activity.[3]

The Constitutional Congress had almost concluded its work by the afternoon of January 26, 1917, when Luis G. Monzón, Deputy from Sonora, presented Articles 34 and 35 for the First Committee on Constitutional Reforms. The Committee reported these articles in the same form as presented by Carranza at the opening sessions of Congress, accompanied by the Committee's own statement on the subject.

> Since the approval of Article 35 textually implies the acceptance of unlimited suffrage for citizens, but actually denies woman suffrage, the committee cannot excuse itself from treating both points, however briefly, especially since two proposals were received in favor of the second point, that of Señorita Hermila Galindo and that of Citizen General S. González Torres, and one against signed by Señorita Inés Malváez.
>
> The defense of the principle of restriction of the suffrage was made very wisely in the report of the Citizen First Chief. . . .
>
> This doctrine as presented may be invoked to resolve negatively the question of feminine suffrage. The fact that some exceptional women have the qualifications necessary to exercise political rights satisfactorily does not justify the conclusion that these should be conceded to women as a class. The difficulty of making the selection authorizes the negative.

The report added that the activities of Mexican women had traditionally been restricted to the home and family, that they had developed no separate political consciousness, and that they "do not understand the necessity of participating in public affairs, which is demonstrated by the lack of any collective movement for this purpose."[4]

The First Committee on Constitutional Reforms, under the chairmanship of General Francisco Múgica, had acquired considerable prestige in the Congress, and its negative report might have been sufficient to decide the question without further discussion, except for a sharp exchange between Deputies Palavicini and Monzón. Luis G. Monzón, who spoke for the Committee in the absence of its chairman, regarded himself as the most "radical" deputy present. He opposed woman suffrage, while Félix F. Palavicini from Tabasco, regarded by his critics as the spokesman of the "conservatives," was considered "a fervent partisan of the feminine vote." Palavicini demanded to be told why the Committee had not considered the proposals for woman suffrage which it had received. Monzón answered by merely asserting that the Committee had accepted the traditional opinion that women should not participate in politics. Palavicini pointed out that "the article provides that all citizens have the right to vote," that "this is a generic term" which makes no distinction as to sex. He added: "I desire that the Committee clarify the status in which this would leave women and if they would acquire the right to organize themselves to vote and to be voted for." Monzón answered this query by simply reasserting, "We did not take this into consideration," amid cries of "That is not the question!" Palavicini later insisted that this "interpolation" had been incorrectly reported in the *Diario de debates*, but even his revised version did not clarify Monzón's somewhat confused remarks. Palavicini admitted that it was "certain that the assembly gave no importance to the subject."[5]

The debate followed immediately with Deputies Bojórquez and Martí speaking in support of the articles as reported by the Committee and Deputy Calderón speaking against. Deputy Calderón favored limited suffrage because he felt that the great social gains of the Revolution could be maintained only by the vote of the intelligent, literate, thinking, liberal citizens. Neither Calderón's remarks nor the remarks of those supporting the articles contained

any indication as to whether or not they favored or opposed woman suffrage or even considered it involved in the provisions of the articles. At the conclusion of this brief debate the Congress adopted the articles without change; Article 34 by a vote 166 to 2 and Article 35 by a vote of 162 to 5.[6] The Congress occupied the three remaining days of the sessions with consideration of such dramatic issues as the anticlerical provisions of Article 130 and the property-holding limitations of Article 27. The proceedings on Wednesday, January 31, 1917, were devoted entirely to the closing ceremonies. The Congress had no further time for consideration of women's political rights even if this had been intended and adjourned without altering the already well-established practices under the Constitution of 1857.

Thus at the very moment when victories for woman suffrage elsewhere gave impetus to Mexican sentiment in its favor, the Mexican Constitutional Congress bypassed the problem largely on the basis of Deputy Luis Monzón's somewhat confused assertion that the Committee did not take it into consideration. There may have been some unrecorded debate in the Committee, but neither the records of the Congress nor its important chroniclers shed any further light on the subject.[7] It is possible to infer that the "radicals," speaking through Monzón, feared traditional Church influence over women and consequent conservative control of feminine voting; and that they chose this means of forestalling debate by Palavicini, the leader of the "conservatives," who favored woman suffrage and was considered proclerical and a formidable debater. The manner in which the Congress dropped the subject without any serious consideration indicates that the "Constitution-makers of 1916-1917" attributed little importance to the subject and assumed that subsequent election laws would specify suffrage qualifications and rules of eligibility for elective office. The somewhat ambiguous nature of the debates and of the provisions of the Constitution, like other provisions of this Constitution and many other constitutions, gave rise to an interminable debate concerning the "real intention of the framers."[8]

Political rights for Mexican women aroused no further attention for some time after the adoption of the Constitution of 1917, but the issue was not dead. Shortly after the adoption of the Constitution, Carranza elaborated his Decree of December 29, 1914,

into a "Law Concerning Family Relations," which, in addition to the right of divorce, gave women right to alimony and to the management and ownership of property, and other similar rights.[9] When it came to voting, however, the national election law of June, 1918, ignored woman suffrage by specifying that "all Mexican males 18 years of age or over if they are married and 21 years or over if they are not, who enjoy full political rights and whose names have been duly registered in their municipalities are eligible to vote" and by requiring that candidates for national offices must be "qualified electors."[10] The triumph of the long campaign for woman suffrage in the United States with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919 and 1920 also produced some echoes across the Rio Grande. Women's organizations began to appear in Mexico as early as 1919, and in 1921 the first Feminist Congress met in Mexico City with large attendance reported. In 1922, during the brief governorship of Felipe Carrillo Puerto in Yucatán, women received the right to vote in local elections; a small group served in the state legislature; and the governor's sister, Elvía Carrillo Puerto, at that time Mexico's most famous feminist, organized women's leagues in the state.[11]

By 1923, women's organizations appeared in considerable numbers in Mexico, of which the YWCA, the Liga Feminista, and the Mexican branch of the Pan American Association for the Advancement of Women were the most important. The Association held its first national congress in Mexico City in May with the proclaimed support of twenty of the state governors and other prominent officials. Civil rights for women and methods of keeping in touch with the activities of women in other countries received a prominent place on the program of the congress.[12] This upsurge of feminist activities produced some talk of woman suffrage in the 1924 presidential election, but Calles certainly had no intention of making it an official issue in his campaign, especially since he regarded the League of Catholic Women as a strong opponent of his anticlerical policy.[13] National electoral reform had no prospect of success without the support of Calles and only a few states altered their election laws in favor of women. In Yucatán, the first state to grant women the right to vote in state and local elections, these rights were nullified after the assassination of Governor Felipe Carrillo Puerto in January, 1924. San Luis Potosí, in the meantime,

in March, 1923, granted women limited electoral rights at the insistence of Governor Rafael Nieto, who had been a radical deputy to the 1916-1917 Constitutional Congress. The law entitled women who could read and write to register and vote in municipal elections in 1924 and in state elections in 1925.[14]

Señora Elvía Carrillo Puerto, under authorization of this electoral reform, established residence in San Luis Potosí and campaigned in 1925 for the office of deputy to the Congress. She had the ostensible support of President Calles, a great friend of her late brother, and the protection of a favorable opinion by Minister of Gobernación Adalberto Tejada, who ruled that being a registered elector under state law fulfilled the qualifications for deputy required by the national election law. The national election law, however, which remained unchanged, continued to designate electors as "all Mexican males 18 years of age or over if married and 21 or over if not, who enjoy political rights and whose names are inscribed in the register of the municipality of their domicile" and to list among the requirements for eligibility for national deputies that they must be "qualified electors."[15] During the campaign, Governor Manrique, who supported doña Elvía, was replaced by Abel Cano, who opposed political rights for women. Nevertheless, Señora Elvía received a majority of over 4,000 votes, but when she presented her credentials in Mexico City the Congress refused to seat her, as it was legally entitled to do under Article 60 of the Constitution. This Article, comparable to Section Five of Article I of the United States Constitution which makes each house "the judge of the elections, returns, and qualifications of its own members," reads as follows:

> Article 60. Each Chamber shall certify the elections of its members and shall resolve such doubts as may arise concerning them. This resolution shall be final and unassailable.[16]

Under the practice in operation in 1925, the permanent committee of the retiring chamber met in August, following elections in July, to install the new members of the Preparatory Junta of the new chamber who then functioned as an Electoral College to verify the recent elections. The permanent committee of each chamber, a body of long standing in Mexican politics composed of a small group of prominent members who remain in permanent

session to perform certain legislative functions in the recess of Congress, would naturally be disposed to install partisans of the group in power as members of the Preparatory Junta of the new chamber. The electoral college function of the Preparatory Junta consisted in examining the election returns, including their own, and preparing a list of those whose elections were in order and who were therefore recommended for seats in the new chamber upon the opening of its regular sessions in September. The Preparatory Junta, at its final session, converted itself into the new house of Congress and approved officially its own report of membership which then, under the provisions of the Constitution, became the final certification by that chamber of the elections of its own members.

Consequently the political party in power could easily refuse to seat anyone it wished without giving any reason, and its decision, once approved by the seated members, was not subject to legal question in any manner. In dealing with electoral questions the Mexican courts have consistently refused to reconsider the decisions of Congress under constitutional Article 60. As early as 1920 the Mexican Supreme Court declared in the case of Alfredo Robles Domínguez that "the Chamber of Deputies, sitting as an Electoral College, in the exercise of the exclusive power which this disposition confers, is sovereign to decide and make the declaration with respect to the citizen who has been elected." In recognition of this fact, the law of *Amparo,* which gives Mexicans the right to appeal for legal protection against the arbitrary acts of officials, specifically excepts in Section VIII of Article 73 the electoral functions granted by the Constitution to the legislative bodies from any protection the law may offer. Subsequent court decisions have confirmed and clarified the supreme electoral power of the legislature in such cases.[17]

The workings of Congress and the decisions of the courts, under these arrangements of the Constitution, gave Señora Elvía Carrillo Puerto no alternative but to accept her defeat as gracefully as possible.

Her failure to gain access to Congress through state election laws did not, however, prevent the states from granting women political rights in local affairs. The state of Chiapas was the first to establish complete equality of political rights for women in state

and local elections. The state legislature passed the bill on May 11, 1925, and it became law three days later with the signature of Provisional Governor César Córdova. The single article provided that "women of 18 years of age or more, are recognized to have the same political rights as men in all the territory of the state of Chiapas. In consequence, they have the right to vote and to be candidates for all offices filled by popular election, whatsoever these may be." In the exposition of motives which accompanied the law, the legislators, with incomparable Mexican gallantry, declared:

> that women, as an integral part of society and the principal factor in the home and family, are affected by all those subjects in which men participate; . . . that the infamous idea has disappeared forever, which existed in ancient times and in savage societies, that women are beings similar to property and arbitrarily subordinate to men, who treat them with the greatest despotism without conceding them any rights whatever; that in the modern life of all the civilized countries of the world women constitute a technical, intellectual, and moral factor of undoubted value, and thus we see them figure in the fields of science, art, and of politics, excelling with extraordinary ease, with the supreme majesty of their moral vigor and by the irresistible force of their feminine charms.[18]

The Chiapas politicians became so inspired on the subject of feminine rights that the deputies from the state promised to present a woman suffrage bill to Congress, although nothing further was heard of it at the time.

The other Mexican states showed no particular eagerness to follow the example of the state of Chiapas. In fact, San Luis Potosí repealed its grant of political privileges to women by the Law of October 4, 1926.[19] Women's organizations, nevertheless, continued to develop and agitation for woman suffrage became more persistent and better organized. The campaign for women's rights, however, suffered a serious setback during the 1928 electoral contest as a result of the assassination of President-elect General Alvaro Obregón on July 17, 1928, in Mexico City, by León Toral, a religious fanatic, at the instigation of a Catholic nun.[20] The vigorous anticlerical reaction of President Calles immediately eliminated all prospect of a Church-State settlement and once more there was

raised in the minds of Mexican politicians the specter of fanatical women voters dominated by the Church. A prominent Mason and member of the Chamber of Deputies was reported shortly afterward to have said of a demonstration in favor of woman suffrage: "Twenty-five thousand Mexican women coming before the Chamber to ask the vote for women! How horrible! It means that, if they obtain their object, we shall have a Bishop for President."[21]

In December, 1927, and January, 1928, the Constitution of the Republic had been amended to give the President a six-year term and permit him to be re-elected after the passage of one term.[22] This change implied the possible intention of Calles to trade places with Obregón once more, but the death of Obregón violently shattered any such hopes, and caused the revolutionary leaders to be faced with the thorny problem of succession. President Calles, in his message to Congress, September 1, 1928, admitted the difficulties posed by the assassination of President-elect Obregón and advocated the founding of a political party to provide candidates for elections and to carry on the ideals of the Revolution. Calles then appointed an organizing committee and designated Querétaro as the place and March 1, 1929, as the time for the first national convention of the party.[23] In the meantime, under the provisions of Article 84, Congress elected Attorney General Emilio Portes Gil Provisional President, with the big task of presiding over the government and calling elections to fill the presidency, while Calles remained in the background as the big political boss. Portes Gil, elected by Congress with the blessings of Calles, strongly advocated the organization of a political party, and took an active role in the selection of delegates and the meeting of the convention at Querétaro in March. He has come rightly to be regarded as one of the founders of the National Revolutionary party (PNR).

The list of delegates and the pictures of the convention indicate a purely masculine assembly; in fact, the statutes adopted by the party clearly imply the disqualification of women for party membership: "Article 4—In order to be a member of the National Revolutionary party the following requirements are necessary: 1—To be a Mexican citizen in the full exercise of his political rights." In spite of its exclusively masculine composition, the convention adopted a party program which included two points in favor of women's rights:

> It shall aid and stimulate the full right of participation of Mexican women in the activities of the political life of Mexico.
>
> The National Revolutionary party shall fight for the incorporation of the farm woman into the economic life of the country, liberating her from hard labor . . . and it will produce propaganda to influence public opinion so that the woman will begin to be a partner and cease to be a slave.[24]

Encouraged by these mildly favorable promises, women once more resumed their agitation in favor of political rights. In July, 1930, the Seventh Congress of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom met in Mexico City, with prominent women delegates in attendance from many parts of the world.[25] These women graced the sessions of the congress with many speeches and proclamations, some of them advocating women's rights, and thus generated considerable interest in the subject.

Because of this interest, reporters requested the opinions of a number of prominent Mexican politicians on the subject of women's rights. Minister of Education Puig Casauranc, who had been continued in his post from the Calles administration, said he saw nothing in the Constitution to deny women equal rights with men. García Téllez, head of the Political Action section of the PNR, took an opposite stand because he believed women were politically unprepared. Provisional President Portes Gil expressed an interest in having women prepare themselves for the use of the ballot and for public office, but did so without apparent enthusiasm.[26] At this point Margarita Robles de Mendoza, a Mexican journalist and noted feminist, who had just returned from Washington, D.C., requested an interview with Portes Gil on the subject of women's rights. Although Portes Gil had not been a member of the Constitutional Congress of 1916-1917 he had been active in the Revolution and had served as Attorney General under President Calles. He certainly had adequate opportunity to become acquainted with the trends of public opinion during the course of the Revolution. Señorita Robles de Mendoza has recorded her version of her question and the President's answer in this historic interview.

> Do you believe that in our Magna Carta there is anything which expressly prohibits the vote of women?
>
> Portes Gil: Not precisely; but it is necessary to suppose that our Constitution-makers did not consider women. When the

> Constitution was promulgated, certainly it was intended to restrict the vote only to men. It is necessary to take into account that in those times they never had the opportunity to educate themselves as they now have and, therefore, were not considered qualified to intervene in public affairs.[27]

These remarks, which received considerable publicity, clearly left the door open for further agitation in favor of women's rights.

Portes Gil resigned from the presidency in 1930 and was succeeded by Ortiz Rubio, nominated for the post of Provisional President by the PNR and duly elected. In 1931, during the provisional presidency of Ortiz Rubio, organized labor became interested in women's rights and organized a Women's Protective Union, registered with the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Labor for the purpose of defending the rights of women in industry, commerce, and agriculture.[28] All of this activity convinced the PNR that women's rights might be a useful political issue, and in the same year it called a women's national congress to discuss the problem. In the course of the discussions, María del Refugio García, delegate from Michoacán and often spoken of as a prominent Mexican Communist, made serious charges against Provisional President Ortiz Rubio and party-boss Calles, whom she accused of going back on their promised support of woman suffrage. Her arrest and imprisonment, which was immediately ordered, touched off such an impressive women's demonstration outside the prison in Mexico City that she was quickly released.[29] The whole question of feminine political rights continued to simmer during the provisional presidency of Abelardo Rodríguez who served the last two years of the six-year term vacated by the death of Obregón.

Chapter 3

CÁRDENAS, CHAMPION OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS

When Lázaro Cárdenas resigned as Minister of War in the spring of 1933 to seek nomination as presidential candidate of the PNR, he had not allied himself with the campaign for woman suffrage. Cárdenas had served a term as governor of the state of Michoacán, a brief period as president of the National Executive Committee of the PNR, and held the post of Minister of War in the cabinet of Provisional President Ortiz Rubio. In none of these positions had he demonstrated any unusual interest in feminine rights.[1] A number of other Mexican politicians, however, had expressed an interest in the issue as a means of promoting their own ambitions. Outstanding among these was General Francisco J. Múgica, a leading radical in the 1916-1917 Constitutional Congress, whose wife, Matilde Rodríguez Cabo, was prominent in Mexican feminist circles. General Múgica, also a native of Michoacán and close personal friend of Cárdenas, may have had some influence in impressing Cárdenas with the importance of women's rights as a campaign issue.

The national convention of the PNR which met at Querétaro in December, 1933, accompanied by so much celebrating that at times it took on the air of a *fiesta,* adopted the first Six-Year Plan and nominated Cárdenas as its presidential candidate with the grudging consent of Calles.[2] The Plan itself, regarded by some as Calles' statement of policy which he intended to impose upon the Cárdenas administration, ignored the subject of women's rights.[3] Cárdenas, apparently still unsure of himself and not certain how popular an issue woman suffrage would be, restricted his remarks on the subject to a few cautious statements in his speech to the convention on December 6.

> It is necessary to invigorate and promote the effort which Mexican women have made to integrate themselves in the public life of the nation. This must be done in a balanced and progressive manner in order to employ their great energies and virtues for the general welfare. For women are beings eminently aware of human problems and sufficiently generous to seek the general interest.[4]

Mexican women took a more active part in the 1934 campaign than in any previous presidential election. Señora Edelmira R., widow of Escudero, founded the Feminist Revolutionary party which worked with the PNR in support of Cárdenas.[5] The PNR even published some profeminine pamphlets which expressed the party attitude, in line with the somewhat crude materialistic doctrines of this period, that incorporation of women into the economic life of the country would make good revolutionaries of them.[6] Cárdenas agreed, in return for this feminine assistance, that if elected he would support a nation-wide drive for woman suffrage.[7] No sooner had he taken office than he was confronted with appeals to make good on his promises. On December 29, 1934, at the request of Margarita Robles de Mendoza, Mexican delegate to the Inter-American Commission of Women in Washington, he announced Mexico's adherence to the Convention on the Nationality of Women signed by 19 American republics at the Seventh International Conference of American States. He then appointed Señorita Palma Guillén Mexican Minister to Colombia, thus gaining for Mexico the distinction of being the first Latin-American country to designate a woman diplomat. Señorita Robles de Mendoza followed up these successes by asking for an official opinion as to whether or not women were included in the rights of citizenship bestowed by Article 34 of the Constitution. Señor Ignacio García Téllez, Minister of Gobernación, answered on March 20, 1935, that there were no reasons for denying Mexican women citizenship in the Republic, but he refrained from expressing himself on the subject of political rights.[8]

The most militant women's organizations, seeing the time ripe for action, proceeded to organize the United Front for Women's Rights. Señora Refugio García, already known for her temporary imprisonment following an anti-Calles speech at a party meeting in 1931, was elected the secretary of the Front and became its

most active promoter. The United Front immediately adopted a program the most important points of which were: the right of women to vote and to be candidates for all elective offices, without restrictions; modification of the Civil Code to give women the same political rights as men; modification of the Agrarian Code to permit women to receive grants of land from the government under the same conditions as men; legal protection of women in government employment; incorporation of indigenous women into the social and political life of the country; establishment of work centers for unemployed women; a program of cultural education for women. The Front at once set about recruiting members and organizing affiliated groups.[9] The PNR countered this activity by incorporating the Feminist Revolutionary party as its own Feminine Action section with plans for the development of a women's rights program.

At this point the drive for women's rights became a mere side show in the dramatic struggle between the Calles and Cárdenas groups for control of the PNR. On June 1, 1935, just six months after Cárdenas took office, Calles held an interview with a group of national senators at his home in Cuernavaca. At this interview he expressed in very strong terms his opposition to the direction that the Cárdenas administration was taking, particularly with relation to the nonfulfillment of the Six-Year Plan. He criticized the prolabor attitude which had given rise to an unprecedented wave of strikes. An account of this interview, written by Senator Ezequiel Padilla, appeared in all the daily papers the next day. At this point the most openly pro-Calles members of the cabinet resigned in a very ostentatious manner, and "the road to Cuernavaca . . . was seen to be crowded with automobiles loaded with persons who were going to felicitate him for his attitude, which would put a limit to the disorder which – according to them – had commenced when the new President took office."[10] Cárdenas answered this move by Calles with a rather mild statement in which he indicated that the labor and agrarian strife was the result of necessary readjustment between the factors of production, and that he had confidence in the labor and agrarian organizations which he felt sure were guided by the "prudence and patriotism demanded by the legitimate interests which they represent."[11]

Cárdenas then requested the resignation of the whole cabinet and proceeded to appoint his friends to the vacated posts. Rodolfo

Elias Calles, the Minister of Communications and Public Works, was replaced by General Francisco J. Múgica, who evidently now considered himself the leader of the Michoacán "radicals" with Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes their spokesman in Congress. General Múgica apparently regarded this as an excellent opportunity to advance his own political ambitions and seized upon the campaign for women's rights as one means of promoting his own bid for the presidential nomination of the party in the 1940 election. According to Portes Gil:

> The activities of General Múgica and of Senator Ernesto Soto Reyes were supported with the greatest enthusiasm by the group of Communist women which was headed by the wife of this same General Múgica, doña Matilde Rodríguez Cabo, who was seconded with passion and fury worthy of a better cause by Señorita Refugio García and Doctors Balmaceda and Ester Chapa – all of them, naturally, with important and splendid remunerative posts in the administration.[12]

The Ministry of Communications offered evident advantages for political promotion. In addition to a large personnel over which the Minister had considerable power to hire and fire it had its own regular radio transmitter and was also in charge of the communications and transportation network of the whole republic. In this capacity it transmitted all the official communications of the government, which the Minister could of course monitor if he wished.

The cabinet shift of June, 1935, transferred Emilio Portes Gil from the post of Minister of Foreign Relations to that of president of the National Executive Committee of the PNR. In view of the fact that Portes Gil had served as Attorney General under Calles, in which post he demonstrated hostility toward the radical extremists, and that Calles had virtually appointed him to the provisional presidency in 1928, Múgica and the other radicals not unnaturally considered him a Calles man and the leader of their enemies in the official family of President Cárdenas. Portes Gil's own statement on the situation is brief, dry, and pointed.

> I have never had any friendship whatever with Señor General Múgica. It is true that in the XXVII Congress we were colleagues and even associated together with some frequency, but our relations were always marked with frank conflict whenever we had to make speeches.[13]

Nevertheless, Portes Gil, one of the founders of the party, knew that its tenure in power depended on avoiding an open split within the party ranks. Consequently, in an effort to diminish dissension, he appointed Senator Soto Reyes head of the Agrarian Action section of the party.

> With regard to Senator Soto Reyes, he had been raised by me to the secretaryship of the Agrarian Action of the party with the object of having an intimate friend of the President, who would represent at the same time the interests of the Michoacán politicians (Múgica, Mora Tovar, Mayes Navarro and the others prominent at that time).[14]

This conciliatory move did not restore party harmony: the conflict, on the contrary, grew more acrimonious.

General Múgica and his associates determined to force a crisis which would result in the resignation of Portes Gil and the consequent termination of Calles' influence upon the Cárdenas administration. Portes Gil soon became aware of their activities.

> The mobs which daily attended the sessions of the Senate in order to support the personal attacks against me were composed of the employees of the Ministry of Communications and Public Works who did not hide the fact that they received instructions to conduct themselves in this manner from the functionaries in the confidence of the head of said Ministry.[15]

In the position of president of the National Executive Committee of the party, Portes Gil vigorously opposed the "futuristic" activities of members of the administration in support of their own presidential ambitions, particularly those of Múgica, Minister of Communications and leader of the radicals, and of Saturnino Cedillo, Minister of War and leader of the reactionaries. Cárdenas also did not remain idle. Following the great wave of support his answer to Calles had received, he secured the removal of five *callista* senators and five state governors and transferred a score of *callista* military officers to unimportant posts.[16] The stage seemed to be all set for the triumph of the radical and reformist elements in the Cárdenas administration who, at the time, also supported woman suffrage as a minor point in their ambitious program of reforms.

The President continued to demonstrate his interest in woman suffrage. In his presidential message delivered to Congress September 1, 1935, Cárdenas referred again to the subject.

> Crowning the important task of unification of the laboring masses will be the organization of the juvenile and feminine sectors which have remained until now on the margin of the interesting social process which we have initiated. This contingent will accelerate the renovating movement for which we fight, which will constitute a factor of triumph for the program of the Revolution, to penetrate into the homes and to prevent a great part of the forces developed there from being spent in overcoming the intimate frictions of the family and instead to invest it in the enormous task to be realized.
>
> As an essential result of this plan the National Revolutionary party has recognized that working women have the right to participate in electoral struggles . . . and that women have the temperamental faculty to enlist sincerely and enthusiastically in the unselfish struggle to triumph over all selfish interests.[17]

This pledge of presidential support produced great activity on the part of the United Front for Women's Rights, which soon claimed some 800 affiliated organizations and over 50,000 members. Cárdenas followed up the message by approving the organization of the Feminine Action section of the PNR to be affiliated directly with the party's Central Political Institute. The Feminine Action program included the incorporation of women into the civic and political life of the nation; equal rights for women to develop their faculties to the extent of their capabilities; and equal rights for women under the civil, social, economic, and political laws of the Republic.[18]

The radicals who favored woman suffrage seized upon this as an opportunity to subject Portes Gil to considerable political buffeting. In December, 1935, just at the beginning of the Christmas season, he asked for an interview with Cárdenas. Portes Gil, according to his version, told Cárdenas that he disapproved of the political activities of Múgica and Cedillo, that he resented attacks made against him by the supposed friends of Cárdenas, that he opposed the action of the radicals and extremists in the party who were giving Mexico a bad name in foreign countries, and that he felt that "the most urgent task which the government has to do is to curb the activities of our Communist agitators." He said that Cárdenas expressed continued confidence in him, insisted that he had no part in the attacks against him as party president, and promised "to put an end to this perfidious activity, which is weaken-

ing us."[19] Portes Gil somewhat grudgingly agreed to continue in the post of party chief, but the tide was running against him.

In the spring of 1936 the PNR granted women the right to vote in party primaries. These primaries were strictly political party elections in which the voters participated as members of the various sections of the party. They elected members to represent the various groups on the party councils and stated preferences for the nomination of candidates to the Congress and the state legislatures, and for the state governors. The women voted as members of labor unions, peasant organizations, and women's sections into which they were incorporated. These elections were held April 5, 1936, in preparation for the general elections in July. The Pan American Union reported some 2,500 women participating in these primaries in the Federal District, where undoubtedly the feminine political activity was greatest. At about this same time a renewed movement occurred among the Mexican states to grant some political rights to women. Guanajuato had taken the lead in 1934, followed by Puebla in 1936, and later by Veracruz, Durango, Tamaulipas, and Hidalgo.[20] The drive for woman suffrage seemed to be gaining great momentum.

The year 1936 was a tempestuous one in Mexican politics. The growing conflict in Europe between Fascism and Communism produced sympathetic conflicts in Mexico. The opening scenes of the death struggle of the Spanish Republic caused serious misgivings among some Mexican politicians about the desirability of feminine participation in politics. The Gold Shirts under the leadership of Nicolás Rodríguez carried on pitched battles with liberal and left-wing groups in the streets of the capital city.[21] Following some rather ineffectual pro-Calles moves by the old Regional Confederation of Mexican Labor under Luis Morones, the labor groups of the country met in Mexico City in February, 1936, to reorganize. This reorganization produced the Mexican Confederation of Labor under the leadership of Vicente Lombardo Toledano, widely believed to be pro-Communist in his sympathies.[22] Shortly thereafter, on April 5, the primary elections of the PNR brought some 3,000 women to the polls in the Federal District, many of them having been urged to participate by labor union and feminist activity. Only four days later, Calles was expelled from the country by order of President Cárdenas.[23] The radical and United Front groups in the party pressed confidently toward the left, supporting woman suffrage

along with other more important reforms. The old guard rallied around Portes Gil and counselled caution, pointing particularly to the unfolding disaster in Spain.

Spain's tragic experience under the Republic amply justified sober second thoughts among the Mexican politicians about the desirability of woman suffrage at this time. The municipal elections of April, 1933, and the national elections in November of the same year, in which Spanish women participated for the first time, produced a rude setback for the socialist center parties supporting the Republic. The Church, fighting bitterly against the anticlerical reforms of the hated Republic, openly exerted its influence over feminine voters, who in some places marched directly from the churches to the polling places. From 1933 to 1936 the center parties balanced an enfeebled government upon a very narrow and shifting parliamentary margin, so that by the time of the triumph of the Popular Front in the elections of May, 1936, the Republic was already doomed whenever the opposition wished to unite and appeal to violence. The insurrection against the reform program of the Popular Front gave the signal for trial by battle. Franco at once brought his Moroccan troops to Spain to support the insurgents and with the help of Mussolini and Hitler ground the Spanish Republic to death in a welter of blood and destruction during the years 1937, 1938, and 1939.[24] Mexican politicians became increasingly aware of the Spanish experience as the gloomy news was augmented by a growing stream of Spanish refugees.

The Mexican special elections in June, 1936, for vacated seats in the national Senate, offered an opportunity for the National Executive Committee of the PNR to make clear its growing misgivings on the subject of woman suffrage. Señor Antonio Luna Arroyo, a member of the Central Political Institute, stated the policy for the party in a speech made in June, 1936, to the Convention of Agrarian Communities and Peasant Syndicates of the state of Coahuila. This speech, entitled "The Mexican Woman in the Social Struggle," was then published by the National Executive Committee, along with its platform on women's rights, as a part of the party's "Library of Social and Political Culture." Señor Luna Arroyo dedicated his address to "the working women of the country" and, after some flattering preliminary remarks, turned more directly to the subject in phrases here and there reminiscent of previous remarks by Portes Gil.

> Up to now the problem of the education of women for the political struggle has been considered by us in the light of philanthropy. We have sought to redeem her, to make of her a teacher or a suffragette; but never before has a serious effort been made to enlist her under the banner of the Revolution, incorporating her in the forefront of those of us who fight fundamentally for the economic and social liberation of the Mexican proletariat without distinction as to sex.[25]

As Señor Luna Arroyo warmed to his subject, his theme of fulsome flattery and fundamental caution became even more clear.

> The conquest of the vote – for which, with a tenacity worthy of a better cause, certain feminist groups have fought – is certainly undeniably important; but it is an error to make of this conquest the only object of the struggle, an error which consists in wishing to give to a problem primarily social, a political solution, which is the same error incurred by our revolutionaries in the first period of the liberative movement.[26]

He added that before women could be granted full suffrage rights the PNR must develop a "revolutionary conscience" in Mexican women to prepare them for participation in the constructive work of a new society. To accomplish this, women must share with men an interest in labor, in wages, in the labor union struggle for social benefits, and in agricultural problems. "When the working women are prepared to face seriously the solution of these vital problems, we will be able to say truthfully, that the Revolution has entered a new and decisive stage: that of integral collaboration of the human factor."[27]

The men also came in for their share of criticism when Señor Luna Arroyo chided them for not discussing political and economic affairs with their wives, and for not demanding revolutionary advantages for their wives and daughters. He raised the spectre of clericalism by insisting that without a revolutionary education women would seek the counsel of the priests who tell the women "that all those things which are bad, including misery, are the punishments of God." The PNR he insisted, was aware of the potentialities of women as well as of their need for education.

> The President – now the authentic representative of the masses – and the president of our Political Institute have de-

> clared on many occasions that woman is not an inferior being, but a being capable in most respects of the same vital concerns as man; to assert contrary would be a scientific error.[28]

But Mexican women, he asserted, require education before they are prepared to participate in political activities.

> This is the reason why it is deceptive to think (and this unfortunately is one of the false preoccupations of certain feminist groups) that it is essential for her to intervene in the political struggle, although she is not prepared for it nor for other more transcendental things.[29]

He then concluded by justifying the denial of full political rights to women in the same speech in which he praised them.

> The National Revolutionary party, taking the most advanced attitude, has declared finally that women, with restrictions, must be entitled to exercise their right of election, when organized groups are involved such as farm women, workers, school teachers, and employees of the state in their own meetings.[30]

He insisted that the party could not give Mexican women full political rights until they became fully integrated into the revolutionary life of the nation, that feminine demands for suffrage could not be justified solely on the basis that this right had been granted to women in other parts of the world.

> In Mexico, without any preparation, it must be considered carefully, *and that which has just happened not long ago in Spain must not be lost sight of.* (Italics mine.) It is clear that Mexican women must vote; it is clear that they must intervene intensely in a manner which implies collaboration in the social, economic, and political problems of the country; but it must be assured along with and parallel to this that women must be prepared.[31]

The National Executive Committee of the PNR, in order not to lose its influence with the feminist groups, included its women's rights program along with the publication of Señor Luna Arroyo's speech.

> The National Executive Committee of the National Revolutionary party recognizes the extent of the rights of women in economic, administrative, civic, and cultural affairs.

Upon this basis its political program is established with the determination to obtain:

1. Equal rights and opportunities for women as workers in the field, the shop, or in public office, without limitations except those demanded by biological differences.

2. Equal remuneration and guarantees for men and women for equal work in quality and quantity.

3. Equal opportunities for education and development of technical capacities in specializations compatible with sex and direction of the home.

4. Equal civil rights and responsibilities for popular elections such as the local legislatures and the Congress of the Union.[32]

The specific program of the Feminine Action section which followed included: rest rooms for women in industries and in public centers; maternity homes and dispensaries for impoverished mothers; employment bureaus for women; health and antialcoholic programs for women. The PNR thus hoped to keep its Feminine Action section active and influential, but to retard the pace with which women should be granted political rights.

The same elections in the summer of 1936 which furnished the party's National Executive Committee an excuse to launch its "go slow" program on women's rights gave the radicals the opportunity they had been seeking to unseat Portes Gil. The National Executive Committee of the party approved certain senatorial candidates opposed by the radicals led by Múgica and Soto Reyes. The Portes Gil candidates were declared the winners in the contests and presented themselves to the Electoral Committee of the Senate on August 15, 1936, to be officially seated. The radicals then rallied all their forces to discredit Portes Gil by refusing to seat the official candidates of the party, consolidating behind Soto Reyes, who was a prominent member of the Electoral Committee. One of the major items in this anti-Portes Gil campaign was a confidential telegram sent in July by Portes Gil to Cárdenas, then in Torreón, urging him to put an end to the strike of electrical workers in the capital city, which shut off all electrical power for ten days and which was causing great discontent and hardship. Portes Gil believed this telegram was decoded and circulated by order of the Minister of Communications, Múgica. At any rate, with this additional ammunition, a minority group of the Senate Electoral Committee on

August 19 refused to seat the official candidates. Portes Gil then visited Cárdenas and presented his resignation. Cárdenas maintained his ignorance of these anti-Portes Gil manipulations, but agreed to accept his resignation as a way out of the difficulty.[33]

The papers carried, on August 20, 1936, the announcement of Portes Gil's resignation. He shortly left the country to represent Mexico on a claims commission meeting in New York City. President Cárdenas later appointed his personal secretary, Luis I. Rodríguez, to the post of president of the National Executive Committee of the party.[34] The radicals and suffragettes rejoiced over the defeat of the conservatives and the banishment of Portes Gil, although the opening of Congress in September produced no dramatic action in favor of woman suffrage. The "Association of Constitution-makers of 1916-1917" took cognizance of the problem at a meeting in Mexico City, September 30, 1936.

> In an explicit interpretation made by constitutional deputy Félix F. Palavicini, Prof. Luis G. Monzón, and the president of the committee of the Constitutional Congress upon the question as to whether Article 34 included women unless they were expressly included, the president of said committee, General Francisco J. Múgica answered: "The Committee on Constitutional Questions which functioned at Querétaro interpreting the spirit of the revolutionary movement which D. Venustiano Carranza headed, upon approving the point related to citizenship, the same as in the other topics of the Fundamental Charter, had no intention of making any distinction because of sex."[35]

Múgica's answer pointedly ignored the whole question of feminine political rights and omitted mention of the fact that he was absent on January 26, 1917, when the subject was debated. In 1936, however, the issue had become popular and seemed likely to promote Múgica's political ambitions. Palavicini, of course, favored woman suffrage both in 1917 and in 1936, while Monzón undoubtedly had changed his tune to harmonize with the pro-Cárdenas radicalism of 1936.

The road appeared to be open for full speed ahead toward reforms, among them the promise of woman suffrage. The radicals and suffragettes were jubilant although Congress adjourned without taking any definite action in favor of feminine political rights. In this atmosphere of enthusiasm only the extreme radicals and Com-

munists, at this time in full cry in pursuit of the "Stalinist" line, were antagonized by the admission of Trotsky and his wife to the country in January, 1937. Mexico's grant of political asylum to these two venerable revolutionists, who had always favored equality of the sexes, seemed to offer further assurance that the drive for woman suffrage could count on success. General Múgica, who as Minister of Communications was instrumental in securing entry for Trotsky, possibly anticipated that this move would give a slight boost to his political ambitions.

Early in February, 1937, Cárdenas indicated his continued interest in the subject in an interview with Joseph Freeman of the *New Masses*, published in New York City.

> WE INTEND TO GIVE TO THE WOMEN OF MEXICO ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN SOCIAL LIFE IN EQUALITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES WITH MEN. Later, little by little, they will be permitted to enter political life on a plane of equality. This is not a simple problem. The men have been taking part in the economic, social, and political life for many years; the women, no. In consequence, the Mexican woman is much more superstitious and fanatical than the man. We propose to solve this problem without attacking superstition directly. By experience we understand that this conduces to a terrible loss of time and energy. At the moment this would distract attention from other more fundamental problems. But we also know by experience that feminine opinion begins to change when women enter into economic activities. Here the forces of superstition have no power over her. These forces do not presume to oppose themselves to labor unions, to high salaries, nor to the reduction of the work day. Nevertheless, it is in the struggle for the achievement of these things that women enter the road to liberty.[36]

In the primary elections of the PNR, held early in April, 1937, women participated for the first time in large numbers over the whole nation in the selection of candidates for Congress. The party rules required the women voters to be members of regularly organized labor syndicates, peasant unions, or agrarian leagues, but the campaign for woman suffrage had gained sufficient momentum so that thousands of women in all parts of the country voted.[37] Señora María del Refugio García and Señorita Soledad Orozco were selected as candidates for the Chamber of Deputies from their respective districts

although the national election law still restricted eligibility to males. They insisted that they intended to run in the regular elections in June; they appealed to the Supreme Court to overrule Article 37 of the electoral law because it conflicted with Articles 34 and 35 of the Constitution which conferred citizenship upon all Mexicans; and they declared their eligibility to vote and to be candidates for all offices filled by popular election without making any distinction whatever as to sex. Señora Refugio García actually campaigned for election in the Uruapan district of Michoacán and was conceded by many observers to have received a majority of the votes. This forced a decision upon the National Executive Committee of the party, which hastily declared that it would be necessary to amend the Constitution before women could participate in national elections as voters and candidates.[38]

Señora Refugio García, fully prepared to take office, descended upon the Electoral Committee of Congress, which opened its preliminary sessions on August 15, 1937. Despite her talk of appeal to the Supreme Court, the decision of the National Executive Committee of the party prevailed and the Electoral Committee of the Chamber of Deputies awarded the seat to a male opponent. The doughty feminine warriors of the United Front, at first so hopeful of victory, did not accept defeat without a struggle. They staged a dramatic and vociferous hunger strike in the street outside the President's home in Mexico City.[39] The strike had been in progress for some two weeks when on August 27, Cárdenas, speaking to a meeting of the Mexican Feminine Confederation in the port city of Veracruz, promised to submit a women's rights proposal to Congress in September when the regular sessions commenced.[40] He thus deprived the fanatical feminists of the delicious pleasure of starving to death in the public streets of the capital before large and sympathetic crowds. They then proceeded to exert pressure on the members of Congress to support such a proposal, and by September 12 a favorable sentiment was noted among Mexican congressmen toward the women's rights proposals Cárdenas planned to submit soon for their consideration.[41]

President Lázaro Cárdenas was a very busy man during the 12 months from June, 1937, to June, 1938. This was the time of the oilworkers' strike and national conflict with the oil companies which resulted in the Mexican expropriation of foreign petroleum proper-

ties in the spring of 1938. It was also the time of the railway conflict which led to the establishment in April, 1938, of a labor union administration for the railways. During this time Cárdenas also thoroughly reorganized the PNR, which became the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM) with a powerful new Popular section based on individual membership rather than group affiliation. The growing threat of war in Europe added to the wave of restlessness in Mexico and the haste to carry out reforms. Cárdenas, nevertheless, found time to make good on his promise of political rights for women. In his address on September 1, 1937, to the opening session of Congress he clearly stated his intentions.

> In the claim for integral equality which has been raised there are arguments more plausible than real in opposition to this act of intrinsic justice, for whoever designates women as a propitious force for conservative ideas, for ideas of fanaticism and reactionary tendencies, forgets that Mexican women have been participating for many years in the social struggle of the country in a proportion very important both in quality and in quantity, and with considerable frequency when our egotism has permitted it have taken part in the most perilous activities as well as the most frank manifestations in favor of the most advanced ideas.
>
> This is the reason why the Federal Executive considers the integral rehabilitation of women and their elevation to a plane of equality with men a just reward and is submitting for your consideration the legal reforms necessary for its achievement.[42]

The president of the Congress, José Cantú Estrada, in his reply to the annual address of the President of Mexico, stated that Congress had heard with interest the President's arguments in favor of incorporating women into political life equally with men. He summarized these arguments but did not commit himself or Congress to any action. "The conceptions pointed out by you in referring to the inequities of a political character . . . have been heard by the Honorable Congress with the greatest attention."[43] Cárdenas, however, did not let the promised reforms rest at this point, and on November 23 the Minister of Gobernación transmitted to the Senate his proposed amendment of Article 34 of the Constitution.

> Article 34 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States is re-formed in the following terms:

> Article 34 — All those men and women are citizens of the Republic, who, having the quality of Mexicans, possess also the following requisites:
>
> I — Are 18 years of age or over if married and 21 or over if not, and
>
> II — Have an honest means of livelihood.[44]

This brief and straightforward proposal would, if adopted, have solved the problems of feminine citizenship and political rights at one stroke, because Article 35 provided that the rights of citizenship included the right to vote and to be a candidate for all offices filled by popular election.

The Senate at once referred the President's proposal to the combined committees of Gobernación and Constitutional Questions, where signs of opposition began to appear. The committees' first report, made on December 10, 1937, added a clause providing for regulation by electoral laws "with the object of preventing the influence of religious groups of whatever creed, upon the exercise of these rights." *El Universal,* on the same day, vigorously criticized the committees' suggestion in an editorial entitled "Feminine Vote, But Without Restrictions." The feminine organizations and the Mexican Confederation of Labor (CTM) rallied to the defense of the original amendment. On December 13, the president of the Senate, prompted by the strength of the reaction to the suggested changes, returned the measure to the committees for further consideration. The committees, on December 18, made a final report to the Senate recommending the President's original proposal for passage without any alterations or additions. On December 21 the Senate began consideration of this proposal.[45]

In the statement of reasons accompanying the final report the committees leaned very heavily on President Cárdenas' arguments in favor of his proposal.

> The constitutional reform which the Executive has initiated is, without doubt, of great importance for the social and political life of the Mexican people, and the motives which sustain it are very worthy of being taken into consideration because they interpret in general terms our historical reality. . . .
>
> It is true . . . that the workingwoman is at the present time a decided and convinced ally of the revolutionary regime of Mexico and therefore is very far from serving later as an instru-

> ment of the conservative forces which still operate in our national community; particularly since the National Revolutionary party for several years in the operation of its pre-electoral acts has conceded the right to vote to the workingwoman organized into the plebiscitary functions of the institution, and has proved in an unquestionable manner that she has fulfilled her duty working conscientiously and with responsibility. . . . The undersigned committees, therefore, taking into consideration all the reasons presented in the initiative of the Executive, believe that the complete equalization of the Mexican feminine element with the men as subjects of citizenship, not only is in accord with the principles of the most pure democracy, but also that it constitutes an act of justice which it is necessary to realize.[46]

With this introductory statement, which sounded very much like saying, "If this turns out to be wrong, don't blame us," the committees reported the proposed amendment for debate.

The Senate debate which followed vied in halfheartedness with the report. Only four senators took part and only two of the four supported the President's proposal without qualifications. Senator Guerrero and Senator Cruz, who supported the Cárdenas proposals without reservation, based their arguments on the materialistic conception of the nature of revolution. Senator Guerrero said that the World War and the incorporation of women into the industrial system had forced men to cease considering women as "simply zoological specimens" and to begin to consider them as equals. He insisted that the situation in Mexico differed from that in Spain because in Mexico the Revolution had already taken place and the revolutionary forces had triumphed whereas in Spain the threatened revolution had not yet occurred.

> Revolutions are social phenomena which do not depend on the caprice of men, they do not arise in human free will; they are social phenomena subject to sociological laws and are born of collective necessity, of the vital vigor of the oppressed classes; they are born thus and are irresistible. Afterwards men come to be as nothing before the principles of revolution. Under these circumstances the arguments that women are not prepared, that fanaticism rules among women, etc., etc., so insistently repeated, lack force.[47]

Senator Cruz echoed this argument:

> Now, as never, is justified the thesis of historical materialism according to which every ideological movement, every revolution in the field of thought, has, as precedents, causes which relate to the social structure, causes exclusively or fundamentally economic.
>
> Feminine suffrage, gentlemen Senators, is not the invention of a cabinet, it is not a speculation of philosophers or politicians; it has been imposed by necessity, by the advance of world industrialism which has dislodged woman from her home. . . . From this point of view feminine suffrage is nothing other than a new weapon in her hands for the conquest of bread.[48]

Senators Basulto Limón and Mora Tovar asserted quite frankly that they had intended to oppose the woman suffrage amendment, but in view of the pending reorganization of the PNR, announced by Cárdenas, they felt obliged to go along with the proposed reform. Senator Basulto Limón was the first to announce his change of heart.

> I confess with all frankness, gentlemen Senators, that I had formed the intention of opposing the concession of the right to vote to women; but in the face of the announced new structure of the National Revolutionary party, and in view of these proposals, I come instead to join in support of the proposal to concede this vote, and come to felicitate from this national tribunal the women of Mexico, because the Revolution is coming to do them justice.[49]

Senator Mora Tovar concluded the debate with a brief but equally frank public confession from the tribune of the Senate:

> I come only to speak a few words to explain my vote; and I will explain it because I was one of those Senators who publicly expressed his disagreement with this initiative of the President of the Republic. . . .
>
> I believed and I continue to believe that . . . in the face of Mexican realities the moment is not opportune; and the moment is not opportune – and I weigh what I have said – because the women of Mexico, the same as the men, are in a minority when it comes to the defense of the Revolution. . . . [Hisses and only one note of applause.] The attitude of the President of the Republic marking new paths for the National Revolutionary party has required that I, as my colleague Basulto Limón, come from the camp of the negative to that of the affirmative; because I must have faith in the National Revolutionary party.[50]

Señor Mora Tovar then closed with an appeal to the women's groups which supported the Revolution to unite in support of the PNR.

Immediately following the confession of somewhat reluctant conversion by Senators Basulto Limón and Mora Tovar, on December 21, 1937, the Senate declared the measure approved by unanimous vote. Apparently the pending reorganization of the party caused sufficient anxiety so that not a vote was recorded against the proposal.[51] This high tide of pressure for the Cárdenas reform manifested other small signs which possibly indicated lack of enthusiasm for woman suffrage. Senator Soto Reyes, the leader of the Michoacán "radicals" in the Senate and a close personal friend of both President Cárdenas and Minister of Communications Múgica, both also Michoacanese, did not participate in the debate in favor of the Cárdenas reform. Likewise the failure of the Michoacán "radicals" to demand amendment of the state constitution at this time to give women political rights in state and local elections presented another perplexing aspect of the woman suffrage campaign.[52] Certainly with such a collection of political luminaries in their constellation they could have ordered alteration of the Michoacán charter with complete confidence in conformity by the state house in Morelia.

The Senate followed up unanimous approval by transmitting the proposed amendment to the Chamber of Deputies on December 23. The next day the Chamber referred the measure to its Committee on Constitutional Questions, but took no further action on the subject so that Congress adjourned at the end of the month with the proposal still pending, despite editorials in the big newspapers supporting the reform, a proclamation in its favor by the powerful CTM, and numerous resolutions, petitions, and telegrams from the important women's organizations.[53] Immediately after the adjournment of Congress a national convention of the PNR approved the reorganization presented by President Cárdenas. This reorganization changed the name to the Party of the Mexican Revolution (PRM), established a new Popular section with individual membership in which women had the same rights as men, and included the Women's section in the Political Institute of the party with representation on the National Executive Committee.[54]

Not content with increasing the power of women in the new party organization, Cárdenas had inserted in the party's new charter

a clear statement of policy on women's rights. Article 6 of the charter asserted: "The feminine contingents which now participate in the formation of the Political Institute and those which shall subsequently join shall be considered in a position of complete equality with the masculine elements."[55] The newly adopted party principles also contained feminist provisions.

> The traditional position of inferiority in which woman has lived with respect to man despite her biological capacity and her effective participation in the process of economic production, demands immediate rectification as an act of justice required by the Revolution which should place her on a plane of rights and prerogatives identical with that enjoyed by individuals of the masculine sex.
>
> Any specific action proclaimed should seek to achieve:
>
> a) The right of women to work under equal conditions with men;
>
> b) Equality of civil rights for men and women;
>
> c) Equality of political rights for men and women; and
>
> d) Identical opportunities for men and women in relation to their professional and cultural preparation.[56]

The adjournment of Congress did not bring to an end the agitation in favor of woman suffrage, nor was Cárdenas to be so easily defeated despite growing signs of doubt concerning the wisdom of permitting women to vote at this time. In June, 1938, Cárdenas issued a call for a special session of Congress, listing the woman suffrage amendment among the subjects to be considered. The special session convened early in July, and on July 6 the proposed amendment to Article 34 came up for consideration by the Chamber of Deputies. After a brief debate, which added nothing to the Senate debate of the previous December, the pro-Cárdenas deputies defeated a motion to postpone the measure for further consideration. The Chamber then suspended its regular rules and called for a vote. In the Chamber, as in the Senate, nobody was prepared to oppose the President openly, particularly with the results of party reorganization still not clear. Consequently nobody voted against the proposal, and it was recorded as approved by unanimous consent on July 6, 1938.[57] The deputies then transmitted the amendment to the Ministry of Gobernación to be referred to the state legislatures for ratification.

During the period between the adjournment of the special session of Congress in July and the opening of the new session in September, 1938, the women's organizations did not relax their activities in support of woman suffrage and Cárdenas remained loyal to his promise of support. The President, in his annual address to Congress on September 1, mentioned his continued interest in women's rights.

> I hope that in conformity with these explanations all the proposals which the Executive Power has had the honor to send for your consideration will be studied and dispatched, insisting in a very special manner that the counting of the ratifications of the reform of Constitutional Article 34 which concedes full political rights to women, be accomplished as soon as possible, urging the legislatures of the states to send in their votes, for this reform corrects the injustice with which up to now Mexican women have been treated.[58]

Deputy Rodolfo Degado, president of the Chamber of Deputies, gave the usual answer praising the policies of the President, particularly the expropriation of the properties of the petroleum companies. He promised the cooperation of the deputies, but conspicuously failed to mention the proposed woman suffrage amendment.[59]

The continued support of President Cárdenas and the active propaganda of the women's organizations seemed to be producing irresistible pressure in favor of women's rights in the winter of 1938. Beginning with that of Durango, on September 8, the Ministry of Gobernación began to receive the ratifications of the state legislatures. On September 15 the combined women's organizations of Mexico gave a tremendous rally and dinner in honor of Margarita Nelken, president of the Spanish Anti-Fascist League and former member of the Communist bloc in the Spanish Chamber of Deputies, who at this time was visiting in Mexico. Luis I. Rodríguez, president of the Executive Committee of the PRM, addressed the assembly. He paid great tribute to women in politics and asserted that the PRM was in the process of transforming its promise of political rights for women into constitutional reality. All of the active women's rights organizations in the Republic were represented by their most prominent members, among them María Refugio García for the United Front for Women's Rights, Margarita R. de Mendoza and Esperanza Balmaceda for the Co-ordinating Committee of Feminine Groups, Matilde Rodríguez Cabo de Múgica for the Asso-

ciation of Mexican Women Doctors, Angela Pinto and Josefina Vincenes for the Feminine section of the PRM, Dr. Ester Chapa for the Communist party, and Amalia Castillo Ledón for the Atheneum of Women.[60]

The women commenced to feel that at long last nothing could check their triumphal march toward equal political rights with men. Under the title "New Heights in Mexican Politics" an editorial appeared in the September 24, 1938, issue of the party organ, *El Nacional,* which presented the points of view of the feminine politicians.

> In a democracy such as ours, more than half of the adult inhabitants are excluded from participation in public affairs, from influencing public decisions, from cooperating in the work of progress initiated by the Revolution. Consequently it is necessary to eliminate the constitutional obstructions which prevent women from full enjoyment of citizenship. In order to accomplish this the PRM has adopted these reforms and through the intelligent and faithful labor of the section of Feminine Action of its Political Institute, has made good progress in the reform of Article 34 of the Magna Carta. . . .
>
> "We the women of Mexico," said the Feminine Action, "are convinced that we shall be able to count on two-thirds of the legislatures to favor us, otherwise history will record in letters of fire those who voted against the liberation of half of the Mexican people."
>
> We do not believe that a cause so just will encounter obstacles to its triumph. Granting the vote to women will complete and enlarge from the political point of view the creative force of the Revolution.[61]

By the end of the year 1938, a majority of the Mexican states had ratified Cárdenas' proposed amendment to Article 34 and at least six had modified their local constitutions to comply with its provisions.[62] The jubilant feminist organizations urged the Mexican delegation to the Eighth Pan American Conference, which met at Lima in December, 1938, to take advantage of Mexico's progress toward women's rights by submitting a declaration on the subject. Consequently the Mexican delegates proposed a resolution to be known as the Lima Declaration in Favor of Women's Rights, which proclaimed women's political and civil equality with men. The

Mexican delegation also submitted and secured approval of a resolution "recommending that the Pan American Union study the possibility of convening an Inter-American Congress of Women, preparing its agenda and determining the place and date of meeting."[63] The feminine politicians, seeing their cause triumph at Lima, once more turned their attention to the Mexican Congress, which by the end of May, 1939, was nearing the close of a long session without having acted further upon the proposed amendment to Article 34 although by that time the legislatures of all 28 of the Mexican states had ratified. The legislative leaders in Congress assured the women's organizations that the session would not adjourn until appropriate action had been taken to put the amendment into effect.[64]

Chapter 4

THE BEST LAID PLANS . . .

BUT THE BEST LAID PLANS of women as well as of mice and men go astray. During the spring and summer of 1939, the conflict raged within the ranks of the PRM over the choice of a presidential candidate for the 1940 election. For a second time the issue of woman suffrage became a mere incident in a battle for control of the party. The struggle involved more than the customary antipathy of Mexican men to the participation of women in politics, although by now this certainly had begun to show itself very strongly in a land with an intense tradition of masculine superiority.[1] By 1939 the conservative opposition to the government's policies had consolidated behind the National Action Party (PAN) and its presidential candidate, Juan Andreu Almazán, a popular army general. The PAN was beginning to put together a frightening array of potentially powerful groups for the 1940 election. It adopted a more moderate policy of social reform than the PRM had been pursuing. The PAN had the apparent support of the proclerical forces, the business interests, and the pro-Fascist groups like the Falange, the recently organized *Sinarquistas,* and the pro-Nazi elements. The pro-Almazán coalition organized the Feminine Idealist party in 1939 to support his candidacy. The Feminine Idealists, with much show of proclerical support and what appeared to be an affluent political treasury, began to establish feminine groups in all parts of the country and threatened to control most of the feminine vote if women gained the right to participate in the coming election.[2]

This faced the PRM with the increasingly dangerous prospect that legalizing equal suffrage rights for women at this time might

mean political victory for Almazán in the 1940 election because of conservative influence on the feminine voters. As usual the conflict centered around the outstanding contestants for presidential nomination by the party. General Múgica, the strongest potential candidate who continued to support woman suffrage vigorously, as the nominee of the party would be in a position to exert strong pressure on Congress to declare the pending woman suffrage amendment adopted and thus give women the right to vote in the coming election. But a curious requirement of the Mexican Constitution offered the party a way out of its difficulty. Article 135, which provides that amendments must be proposed by two-thirds of Congress and ratified by a majority of the state legislatures also requires that before an amendment can legally become a part of the Constitution "the Congress of the Union shall make an official count of the votes of the legislatures and a declaration that the additions or reforms have been approved."[3] Before this escape clause could be used by simply withholding the necessary "declaration" of Congress, some means had to be found to scuttle the candidacy of General Múgica.

Múgica's opponents seized upon his friendship with Trotsky as a means to discredit him. He was branded, rightly or wrongly, with "Trotskyism" because in January, 1937, as Minister of Communications, he had been instrumental in securing political asylum for Trotsky in Mexico and subsequently he and his wife maintained a casual acquaintance with Trotsky and his wife. Lombardo Toledano, leader of the CTM, demonstrated dutiful hostility at this time toward anything that sounded or looked like "Trotskyism" and consequently joined the opposition to Múgica.[4] President Cárdenas, faced with this conflict within the ranks of the party, reluctantly agreed to the nomination of General Manuel Ávila Camacho, a faithful but rather colorless party member, who already by the summer of 1939 had secured the backing of Lombardo and the labor unions. General Ávila Camacho had quietly begun to draw the fangs of the PAN attack against the PRM by announcing a moderate policy of "consolidation," by asserting that he and his wife were faithful Roman Catholics, and by maintaining his continued interest in women's rights.

While still more than six months away from official nomination by the party he referred to women's rights in public and had his wife accompany him and appear on the platform with him at politi-

cal rallies. Speaking at the bull ring in Mexico City on Sunday, April 16, 1939, with no thought of the irony of the location, he proclaimed "It Is Necessary to Elevate Women" as one of the points of his program.

> As an act of justice of the Revolution we must train women, elevating them to their full rights, to orient the youth which comes from the field, the shops, the schools, and the universities and to expect from the constructive power of the people the opportunities of economic prosperity, animated by social justice, in which they can, by their own legitimate efforts, contribute to the greatness of the country and produce the well-being to which they have a right.[5]

In the meantime Congress failed to act on woman suffrage as its session drew to a close. What happened to the proposed amendment during the remainder of the session is not clear, but Congress adjourned in July, 1939, without having made the necessary declaration of constitutional change and without having altered the national election law. A subsequent reference in the Chamber of Deputies in December, 1946, to the fate of the Cárdenas amendment did not shed much light on the subject. In 1946, the Chamber's Committee on Constitutional Reforms reporting on President Miguel Alemán's proposal of limited political rights for women included the statement:

> November 19, 1937, the Executive of the nation initiated the reform of the mentioned article, which was approved by both Chambers and in the majority of the local legislatures, authorizing to women the right of citizenship without any restrictions whatsoever. This reform, which lacked only the legal declaration, was left abandoned in the archives of the Chamber in an inexplicable form for almost ten years, possibly in fear of the undesirable results it might produce in the political life of the nation.[6]

When it became clear to the party leaders, as early as May, 1939, that the woman suffrage amendment would not be proclaimed, Luis I. Rodríguez, former personal secretary to Cárdenas, resigned from the post of president of the National Executive Committee of the party. A few weeks later Heriberto Jara, prominent among the extreme radicals in the 1916-1917 Constitutional Congress, assumed the vacated post. Jara was no proponent of woman suffrage because

of his fear of clerical and conservative influence over feminine voters. Added to all these signs there descended upon the party leaders a sudden silence on the subject of feminine political rights, which under the circumstances seemed to be another indication of a change of heart. General Camacho, again accompanied by his wife, made no reference to women's rights in his address in Mexico City on October 29, 1939, at a great parade held in his honor. Neither did he mention the subject in his speech to the party convention, November 3, accepting nomination as its presidential candidate. General Jara likewise ignored the subject in his address to the convention accepting the post of president of the National Executive Committee of the PRM.[7]

Cárdenas had already declared that he did not intend to impose a candidate upon the party nor control the 1940 elections, and this left Ávila Camacho in a very strong position to control party policies and, through the party, the actions of Congress. Although Cárdenas was unwilling to impose his candidate upon the party, or to control the 1940 elections, he did not waver in his support of woman suffrage. Without clear control of the party, however, he lacked the means to prod Congress into action. In his address to the opening session of Congress, September 1, 1939, he once more urged action on the pending woman suffrage amendment.

> The reform of constitutional Article 34 of our Supreme Law which grants the vote to women is also pending for lack of the required declaration. From the beginning of my regime I have been trying as a matter of principle to repair the grave injustice which deprived Mexican women of important rights but imposed all the obligations of citizenship.
>
> Mexican suffrage should be completed by adding the vote of women, otherwise the civic electoral function will be incomplete because of its restricted application and will continue the present injustice with depressing effects on the civilization and the revolutionary doctrine of our times. And although it may be feared that woman suffrage will bring problems of an anti-revolutionary nature when granted, this should not delay legislative action, because one of our elemental duties is to organize and lead, in a manner favorable to the nation, the fundamental activities of the sovereign power of the people.[8]

The annual message of President Cárdenas and the evasive reply of César Martino, president of the Chamber of Deputies, indicated

that both recognized that Cárdenas no longer exercised complete control over the party and that both entertained doubts about the ability of the party to control the feminine vote if it should be granted. Deputy Martino's reply referred only briefly to the subject.

> With reference to the proclamation of the reform of constitutional Article 34 of our Supreme Law, by which women would be granted the right to vote, this proclamation has not yet been made due to the receipt of the approval of the local legislatures during the period of the recess of the houses of Congress, and also because this was not designated as the subject of a call for a special session.
>
> We hold with you the idea that suffrage in Mexico should be fully completed by the women's votes. This is not the occasion for the enumeration of the reasons which uphold this thesis, but the affirmation of the revolutionary sentiment by the XXXVII Legislature, the present Congress of the Union, is the best assurance that Mexican women can count on the present popular representatives for the greatest sympathy and support.[9]

The period in which Cárdenas could command the party or Congress was rapidly drawing to a close. The mounting anxiety of the women's organizations impelled them to demand action before it was too late.

The feminist groups exerted sufficient pressure on the National Convention of the PRM, in November, 1939, to secure the adoption of a women's rights plank in the Second Six-Year Plan, the party's program for the coming presidential term. This included amending Article 34 of the Constitution and changing the election laws to give women equal political rights with men. The new plan contained two provisions relating specifically to women's rights. Section XVI of Chapter I dealing with "Agricultural Production" stated that farm women, like all Mexican women, should be considered absolutely equal with men both legally and in fact. Subheading 23 of this same section stated: "Courses for farm women shall be established to prepare them culturally in all senses." Chapter X, Section I, committed the party:

> To reinforce the full standing of the constitutional democratic system, through the establishment of rules and regulations of the electoral function, in a manner that guarantees the effectiveness of suffrage, and consequently insures due respect for the will of

the majorities concerning the integration of the government.

1 – An adequate electoral law for the renovation of federal powers, which at the proper moment shall include the right of women to vote, shall be studied and issued.[10]

The same party convention which adopted the Second Six-Year Plan also nominated General Manuel Ávila Camacho, well-known for his cautious attitude toward women's rights, as the party's presidential candidate. Consequently the hope for immediate proclamation of feminine political rights began to fade. The Mexican Congress, which traditionally concludes its sessions early in presidential election years, approached the end of its session without any further action on woman suffrage. It became increasingly clear that only drastic action could rescue the feminist cause in time for women to take part in the 1940 election. Consequently, the Feminine Action section of the party, its affiliated organizations, and the other feminist organizations that were willing to cooperate combined to send a telegram to President Cárdenas on March 24, 1940, urging him to call a special session of Congress as soon as the regular session ended and to designate the proclamation of the pending woman suffrage amendment as the sole subject for its considerations.[11] The Congress would supposedly be bound to consider the subjects mentioned in the presidential call for a special session and a direct showdown on the issue might allow the women to exert sufficient pressure on Congress to succeed in a last desperate bid to participate in the general elections to be held on July 6.

President Cárdenas, true to his determination not to intervene in the election, refused to call this special session. The final feminine effort failed. The 1940 national election took place in July without the benefit of woman suffrage. Although Cárdenas took no part in the election, the Ávila Camacho forces undoubtedly exerted every influence they could to secure a favorable vote. The election, accompanied by some violence, resulted in an official count of over 2,000,000 votes for Ávila Camacho and less than 200,000 for Almazán, but many observers believed the election was considerably closer than the official figures indicated.[12] Almazán left the country and his followers asserted that the PRM had cheated them of their victory in the election. It is impossible to determine whether or not the vote was close enough that woman suffrage would have pro-

duced a different result, but there are prominent Mexican politicians still willing to assert that the proclamation of the woman suffrage amendment by Congress might have resulted in the defeat of the PRM and victory for the PAN. Undoubtedly this election presented the most serious challenge the government party had faced since its inception as the PNR in 1929, but the outbreak of World War II the next month and the Mexican fear of becoming another Spain consolidated the country behind Ávila Camacho. The *almazanista* threats of revolt produced no serious uprisings.

The dramatic events of World War II overshadowed the issue of woman suffrage during the presidential term of Ávila Camacho, 1940-1946. Failure to secure suffrage in the 1940 election campaign, however, aroused the resentment of the feminist organizations which had fought so valiantly for woman suffrage for some ten years. The women felt that the male politicians had used every trick, fair and unfair, to deprive them of the effective right to vote. The masculine versus feminine conflict in politics became more intense. The national tradition of masculine superiority manifested its political influence once more. Lillian Estelle Fisher, in an article on the status of Mexican women, concluded:

> Without every member of their sex having the right to vote, Mexican women realize that they cannot obtain all that is needed relative to social legislation, as they do not have a legal weapon. Frequently Mexican husbands are Marxists outside and feudalists within their homes, and politicians fight tenaciously, with every weapon in their power, the efforts of organized women to secure the vote and obtain really effective laws to protect themselves.[13]

The wave of feminist sentiment following the election, augmented by the pro-Russian sympathy of the early days of the war, produced a great growth in the United Front for Women's Rights so that at the peak of its power in 1942 it claimed more than 50,000 members and some 800 affiliated organizations.[14]

The political successes of women elsewhere in the world, particularly in Latin America, further agitated the Mexican feminists. In Ecuador women had enjoyed full political rights since the Constitution of 1929. Brazilian women participated in the election of the constitutional assembly of 1934, in which one woman served. The Brazilian Constitution of that date made no distinction between the sexes in the exercise of their political rights and subsequent consti-

tutional changes left these rights undiminished. Later in the same year Cuban women also received full political rights in a new constitution. The fact that 649,892 Cuban women out of an electorate of 954,722 voted in the election July 14, 1940, just a week after the election in which Mexican women had been disappointed in the hope of casting their first national ballots, added to the bitterness of their disappointment. In 1935 the Puerto Rican registration law gave women equal voting rights with men, which rights they exercised fully beginning in 1936 and subsequently elected women to both houses of the insular legislative assembly.

As early as 1917 the Uruguayan Constitution had authorized two-thirds of the Congress to grant political rights to women, but this was not done until 1932 and did not become effective until 1938. In El Salvador the Constitution of 1939 granted suffrage rights to women, but subsequent electoral laws imposed higher voting qualifications on women than on men. Dominican women received equal political rights in 1942, while in Venezuela the constitutional reform of April, 1945, granted women the right to vote in municipal elections and to hold local offices. The Panamanian Constitution of March, 1946, abolished all political distinctions between men and women.[15] Thus Mexican women had to suffer the humiliation of seeing their sisters in nine other Latin American nations enjoy full or extensive political rights while Mexican women could vote or hold office in only a few states. The Mexican feminists chafed under these restrictions as each passing year they watched more of the American republics grant political rights to women.

Miguel Alemán, former campaign manager for Ávila Camacho and Minister of Gobernación in his cabinet, began to realize that a dramatic gesture in favor of women's rights might give a great boost to his presidential ambitions, particularly since he faced what threatened to be formidable opposition. In the first few years of the Ávila Camacho administration Vicente Lombardo Toledano looked like a powerful contender for 1946. He openly sympathized with the Russians, then very popular in world opinion because of their heroic stand against the Nazi onslaught. He had the support of organized labor and of the United Front for Women's Rights. Heriberto Jara, president of the National Executive Committee of the PRM and also often accused of being sympathetic with Communism, appeared to favor Lombardo Toledano. Alemán, as

Minister of Gobernación, occupied a powerful position from which to influence Mexican politics. When Lombardo Toledano was elected secretary of the Latin American Confederation of Labor (CTAL), Alemán secured the selection of Fidel Velásquez to replace him in the secretaryship of the CTM. Velásquez maintained his loyalty to the PRM, and thereafter Lombardo Toledano began to lose control of organized labor in Mexico.[16] Alemán, the first civilian in nearly a century who appeared to have a good chance at the presidency, enjoyed no particular popularity with the army, but as the son of a prominent revolutionary general he was considerably less unpopular than Lombardo Toledano, also a civilian. The United Front for Women's Rights continued for some time to support Lombardo Toledano, but it slowly became clear that although solid feminine opposition to Alemán could be embarrassing, the Feminine United Front could not elect Lombardo Toledano, particularly since women still did not have the right to vote in national elections.

The weakening of Lombardo Toledano by breaking his strangle hold on Mexican labor did not end Alemán's difficulties. Ezequiel Padilla, staunch *callista,* Mexican ambassador to the United States, now Minister of Foreign Affairs and maneuvering skillfully for the leadership of the conservative opposition, began to loom as an even more serious threat. The conservative forces looked favorably on woman suffrage as a campaign issue, confident in their influence over the feminine vote. The fear of conservative control of woman suffrage, entertained by the progressive politicians and eloquently expressed by Mora Tovar in the Senate debates on December 21, 1937, still remained.

> I come thus to cast my vote for the affirmative, pleading with the women of the Revolution from this tribune, that they change their present position. Facing them is the great percentage of the women of the Reaction, a great percentage which is an immovable bloc which counts upon unlimited resources — the resources of capital, and above all, the resources of the clergy — ; in the face of this power which the women of the Reaction constitute, are the emancipated women, lamentably divided into distinct groups, from the classical liberals, to the red Communists, women to whom I direct myself in order to justify my vote, so that I can plead with them in the name of their sons and in the name of the Revolution that they close their ranks that the right

which we here authorize them may be for their own good and for that of humanity.[17]

The *alemanistas* therefore felt themselves under considerable pressure to seize the issue of women's rights from the conservatives and turn it to their own advantage.

The need of some dramatic issue like woman suffrage was further enhanced by the fact that the party had been shaken by serious public accusations of corruption and undemocratic practices. In August, 1943, Jorge Meixueiro, a recently elected deputy from a rural district in Oaxaca, appeared in Mexico City to take his seat in the Chamber. Meixueiro, confident that he had received a clear majority in his home district, began to suspect that an unpopular rival might be seated in his place when the electoral committee of the Chamber showed reluctance to honor his credentials. The official list of deputies issued August 15 did not contain his name, and the youthful Meixueiro, in despair, asked the privilege of addressing the Chamber, meeting in its electoral capacity. With this permission he appeared on the 18th, made an impassioned speech in which he asserted that there was no question of his victory in the July elections and that although all the deputies knew this they were forced to seat his rival because of party discipline. He acknowledged the futility of appeal from this tyrannical party decision and dramatically concluded his speech by taking a pistol from his pocket, firing a shot into his own breast and falling dead on the floor of the Chamber.[18]

Hardly had the scandal and publicity caused by the Meixueiro incident died down when, at the opening of Congress the next fall, September, 1944, the party became the target of further accusations. Deputy Herminio Ahumada, president of the Chamber, in his reply to President Ávila Camacho's annual message, denounced "false revolutionaries" and "bad Mexicans."

> Even in times like the present when the example of integrity, honesty, and austere virtue in the public and private life of the Chief Executive who now controls the destiny of the Republic should be sufficient to restrain the bad Mexicans, the false revolutionaries under the protection of the pure doctrine of the Revolution corrupt, mock, and destroy its social conquests. These are the only inheritance of the people whom daily they plunge further into their misery while proclaiming their liberation. . . .

> As long as there is no respect for the vote of the citizens and the electoral function is not cleansed of its vices; as long as the decisive factors in this function are a single party, the lack of respect for public opinion, the exclusion clause, gangsterism, sham and falsehood, democracy will not become a reality in Mexico.[19]

These accusations, undoubtedly pointed at Maximino Ávila Camacho, Minister of War and brother of the President, resulted in Maximino's resignation and the appointment of ex-President Lázaro Cárdenas to the vacated post.

President Ávila Camacho's partisans in Congress bitterly resented Ahumada's charges. A few days later the Senate adopted, without opposition, a resolution condemning Ahumada for his remarks, which, when read to the deputies, resulted in his resignation as president of the Chamber.[20] Nevertheless the press seized upon Ahumada's criticisms and the whole thing caused quite a scandal. The return of Cárdenas to the cabinet, at this juncture, with his immense popularity and great influence over the military, underlined his undoubted veto power over any party nominee for the presidency. Cárdenas' great influence plus his long-time championship of women's rights put him in position to impose a woman suffrage commitment on Alemán if he wished. At the same time the growth of the *Sinarquista* movement, with increasing demonstration of its strength and the violent nature of the reaction it represented, emphasized the tendency of the conservative forces to coalesce behind the leadership of Padilla. Strong feminine support of Padilla's candidacy could be very embarrassing for Alemán and for the party even though women could not vote except in local elections in a few states. All these events pointed up the utility of a woman suffrage plank in Alemán's platform for the coming election.

Chapter 5

FIRST FEMININE VICTORY

ALEMÁN, EAGER for an overwhelming victory, determined to revive feminine activity in the party and to secure the maximum feminine support for his candidacy. The party convention, which lasted into the early part of 1946, designated him official candidate and adopted his plan of party reorganization. Alemán wished to take advantage of the anticipated postwar business boom and hence emphasized the stable and conservative characteristics of the party, which he renamed the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). The seventh point in the program of the newly reorganized party asserted:

> The traditional situation of inferiority in which women have lived with respect to men, notwithstanding their biological capacity and their effective participation in the process of production required by the Revolution, must be transformed to establish them on a plane of rights and prerogatives identical to those enjoyed by individuals of the masculine sex.[1]

Alemán then established a Feminine Technical Commission within the Popular section of the party to advise him on women's problems. By means of the Feminine Technical Commission and the Feminine section of the party attached to its Political Institute he hoped to gain considerable feminine support.[2]

The electoral law of December 31, 1945, made sure, however, by continuing to restrict voting to males, that a feminine landslide to Padilla and the Mexican Democratic party — the name chosen by Padilla for his conservative alliance — would not lose the election for Alemán. The law established electoral commissions under the Ministry of Gobernación to supervise elections, provided that only

recognized political parties could participate in elections, and repeated with monotonous regularity that "Mexican men, 18 years of age or over if married and 21 years of age or over if not who are in the full enjoyment of their political rights and are enscribed in the electoral list, are electors."[3] This continued official discrimination against women in the election law, adopted so close to the election, further irked the feminine politicians. Then in May, 1946, virtually on the eve of the election, the Permanent Commission of the Chamber of Deputies answered a request by Señora Castillo Ledón for permission to accept a decoration from the Dominican Republic by a declaration, on the 15th, that permission was not necessary since Article 34 of the Constitution did not recognize the citizenship of women.[4] These open affronts to the feminist cause aroused the women to vigorous political activity.

The special Feminine Technical Commission, composed of delegates from all the women's organizations loyal to Alemán, held conferences and became very active in the campaign preceding the election in July, 1946. Candidate Alemán responded by favoring the immediate grant of suffrage rights to women in municipal elections because "women understand exceptionally well municipal problems affecting the schools, prices of the necessities of life, milk and water supply, sanitation, public health measures, and numerous other matters having to do with the welfare of homes and families."[5] Among the prominent women who worked vigorously and effectively for the Commission should be mentioned María Elena Ramírez, founder of the Mexican YWCA and well-known social worker, and her sister Guadalupe, who for a time cooperated in the publication of the feminine magazine *LUZ;* Beatriz Velasco de Alemán, wife of the candidate; Aurora Fernández, secretary of the Feminine Action of the powerful National Farm Women's Confederation (CNC); and Amalia Castillo Ledón, famous author, champion of feminine rights, and founder of the Mexican Alliance of Women. María Elena Ramírez, who proved very skillful in uniting the women's organizations in support of Alemán, presided over the Technical Committee which directed the Commission.[6]

The government party, just reorganized as the PRI, won the election for Alemán, but the opposition made the most impressive showing it had been able to muster since the Revolution. The official count showed 1,786,901 for Alemán and 443,357 for Padilla,

with sufficient congressional votes to give the PAN, the backbone of Padilla's alliance, several seats in the Chamber of Deputies for the first time.[7] Thanks to the efforts of the Feminine Technical Commission there was no landslide of feminine support for PAN or Padilla, and the women, sensing an opportunity to win an important political triumph, planned their postelection strategy very shrewdly. The Technical Committee, realizing that Alemán's victory probably would increase the number of women's organizations willing to support him now that he was President-elect, issued a call for election of delegates, by all the women's organizations willing to participate, to a national round-table conference. This conference scheduled its meeting for November, 1946, after Congress had opened its sessions, but just before Alemán took office on December 1. It met in Mexico City on November 27 and 28, was well attended, and gave an impressive appearance of feminine unity throughout the whole Republic. It adopted an extensive and well-organized program, edited by Señora Castillo Ledón, which included recommendations dealing with agrarian laws, monopolies, child welfare, health and nursing, juvenile delinquency, education, illegitimacy, prostitution, and domestic and marital problems, and under the heading "Recommendations to the President," proposed national universal woman suffrage.[8]

Alemán evidently felt that with a six-year term safely ahead of him he certainly could afford to make good on his promise to grant woman suffrage in local elections. Consequently in his inaugural address to Congress on December 1, 1946, he praised the women for their loyal support of his candidacy and declared that democracy signified equality for all. He then submitted concrete proposals to fulfill his election promises.

> Honorable Congress, to fulfill the proposals I have presented I submit to your consideration . . . the following:
>
> g) To expand Article 115 of the federal political Constitution so that women may vote in municipal elections and be voted for under equality of conditions with men.[9]

A few days later, on December 4, Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, newly appointed Minister of Gobernación, transmitted to the Senate the proposed amendment preceded by the President's statement of reasons in support of the change, in which he emphasized the following important considerations:

The city councils have as their principal function to offer services which make life more comfortable, hygienic, and safe, which require more technical preparation and knowledge of the peculiarities of the municipal community than the political capacity which is required to participate in federal citizenship. Considering that all the members who compose the local community, based on a political organization without distinction of sexes, are interested in the good administration of the subject of municipal life, it is evident that the woman should intervene in the electoral functions relative to the designation of the members of the city councils as well as to elect the councilors, or *regidores,* and also to be nominated for these posts. And as municipal matters are submitted to the competence of the states, it is necessary to include in the Federal Constitution, by means of a reform or corresponding addition, the precept which establishes the access of the Mexican woman to the political life of the municipality; which will permit us to see initially the results which may serve later to give to the woman a fuller electoral capacity, as well in the political sphere of the states as in that corresponding to federal citizenship.[10]

The Senate approved the proposed amendment without objection and with very little debate, in a brief session on December 10, and on December 13 passed it on to the Chamber of Deputies without alteration. The Chamber immediately submitted the proposal to its Committee on Constitutional Questions which, after some communications with the Senate over typographical errors, presented its report December 19. The committee of the Chamber of Deputies likewise did not alter the text of the proposed reform of Article 115.

The states shall adopt for their interior rule the republican, representative, popular form of government, having as the basis of their territorial division and political and administrative organization the free municipality, in conformity with the following provisions:

1. Each municipality shall be administered by a town council popularly elected and shall have no intermediate authority between it and the government of the state.

2. In the municipal elections the women shall participate, under equality of conditions with men, with the right to vote and be voted for.[11]

The committee introduced the amendment with its own statement of reasons.

> It is undoubtedly true that the home, in whose interior the woman plays the preponderant and exclusive role, is the basic element of all social organization, because in it, the children receive an education which later will be the foundation upon which rests their future activities with relation to social morals. Therefore, the collaboration of the woman in the political life of the towns will aid in the selection of persons or will give them a part in the discharge of these functions improving the composition of these corporations which, under the rule of our Constitution, are the base of the political and administrative organization of the Republic.[12]

The Chamber of Deputies proceeded at once to debate the proposed amendment, first on the general subject and then in detail. Only Deputy Aquiles Elorduy, one of the three PAN members in the Chamber, spoke against the general principle of the proposal. Hisses from the galleries by the representatives of the important feminine organizations punctuated his remarks. He praised the Mexican home as the most perfect in the world and asserted his desire to protect it against disruptive influences. He said that men must cling to the few distinctions and superior powers left to them in a world in which women encroached more and more upon masculine activities. He gallantly thanked the women in the galleries for supporting his arguments by their disorder and concluded by repeating his unalterable opposition to woman suffrage. "I am against the municipal vote for women, I will continue to be against it for however many years are left to me in my life."[13] Eight other deputies participated in the general debate, all of whom, members of the PRI, supported the amendment. In substance their discussions repeated the arguments presented by the President in referring his proposal to Congress; that the municipality was the unit of government nearest the home and therefore the one in which women were most fitted to participate.

Deputy Joel Pozos León led the speakers in favor of the amendment. He asserted that the old beliefs about the inferiority of women had been proved false. He maintained that the participation of women in local politics would be advantageous because "with their cooperation, with their virtues, the municipalities will

enter a period of improvement and moralization which must redound to the benefit of Mexico."[14] José Castañón, deputy from Chiapas, recalled that in 1925, when acting Governor of Chiapas, he had promulgated the law giving women equal political rights with men. Since that time, he insisted, the women of Chiapas had participated satisfactorily in politics, some of them with considerable distinction. Francisco Sarquís Carriedo, speaking for the committee, pointed out that it had studied the problem very carefully. It found that there were slightly less than ten million men in the country and approximately an equal number of women; that about three and one-half million of the men could read and write, and that the number of literate women was about the same. He therefore considered the women about as well educated and qualified to take part in politics as the men. Rafael Cebada Tenreiro, of Yucatán, received much applause when he rose to honor the memory of Felipe Carrillo Puerto, who, as governor of Yucatán, had granted political rights to the women of that state.

Pascual Aceves Barajas said he did not expect any catastrophe from the participation of women in politics such as that feared by Aquiles Elorduy. Women had always taken a prominent part in world affairs and in the history of Mexico. In recent times they had many more opportunities to fit themselves to participate in all the important activities of any country. "We must share with women the rights of citizenship, give them an opportunity in the exercise of their civic life to learn the virtues and defects of the men, in order that their experience in the service of the country may help us to solve the problems which afflict Mexico."[15] Deputy José S. Benítez pointed out that women already took part in the elections of the labor and farm organizations. Since they had exercised these rights effectively for some years, he saw no basis upon which they should be denied participation in municipal politics. Carlos Sansores Pérez, deputy from Campeche, mentioned that women already had the right to participate in municipal politics in his state. He regarded all talk of protecting women and the home as merely another means of continuing to deny them their political rights. "Fellow deputies," he concluded, "it is not by refusing women their right to participation in the destinies of Mexico that we will make a great and strong country; it is by permitting this participation and struggling along with them, com-

peting with them in a manner noble, generous, and patriotic, that we can win for Mexico distinction in the family of nations."[16]

Deputy Fernando Magro Soto closed the general debate by recalling that the Chamber had under consideration only the proposal of the President and not the general principle of women's rights. The President's proposal merely reflected the realities of Mexican life because no one could deny that "women are the most qualified to direct and to lead properly municipal services." Aquiles Elorduy, deputy from Aguascalientes, PAN member, and sole orator against the general principles of the amendment, sought an opportunity to make a rebuttal to some of the criticism against him, but the Chamber refused. The debate ended. The deputies proceeded at once to vote on the general principle, approving it by the almost unanimous vote of 77 to one.[17] The debate on the details of the amendment led to prolonged argument between PAN Deputy Juan Gutiérrez Lascuraín and PRI Deputies Alejandro Gómez Maganda, Luis Marquez Ricaño, Francisco Sarquís Carriedo, and Fernando Magro Soto, on the question of whether he and Ramírez Munguía, the other PAN deputy, could propose additions to the amendment. The Chamber finally decided that since the PAN deputies did not vote against the general principle of the amendment they could not propose additions at this time, but would have to submit their proposals later in the form of amendments to the amendment. This cleared the way for the vote which resulted in 78 in favor and two against the details of the amendment to constitutional Article 115 submitted by President Alemán.[18]

Approval by the Chamber of Deputies in the debate of December 23, 1946, put the amendment immediately before the state legislatures for ratification. In the meantime, on December 26, deputies Gutiérrez Lascuráin and Munguía introduced their proposal of additions to the amendment of Article 115. It provided for a system of proportional representation in the municipalities and numerous judicial safeguards to protect the municipalities against interference by the central government. The PAN deputies hoped that the proportional system, favoring minority representation, would increase their membership on municipal councils, and that strengthened legal defenses for municipal autonomy would protect the municipal politics of PAN members against PRI interference through the agency of the central government. The statement of

reasons accompanying their proposal gave a very broad hint concerning their intentions.

> To make effective the participation of women in public municipal life is certainly of great importance; but undoubtedly it is a necessity – in order that this participation of women be made more effective and unchallengeable – to expand Article 115 of the Constitution to assure both the actual autonomy of the municipality, and the purity of its democratic regime, which is a requirement of this autonomy.[19]

The text of the amendment to Article 115 proposed by PAN contained only one brief reference to woman suffrage: "In municipal elections the woman shall have the active and passive right to vote under the same conditions as the man."[20] The Chamber of Deputies referred it to the Committee on Constitutional Questions, which filed it away without further reference as the PAN had no deputy on the committee. Since most of the state legislatures were also in session and the newly-organized PRI exercised strong control over them, the ratifications rapidly began to pile up in the Ministry of Gobernación. The Chamber of Deputies, with the PAN proposal safely buried in committee, adjourned for a brief Christmas vacation. When Congress resumed its session after the Christmas vacation a majority of the states had completed ratification as required by the Constitution and on December 30, Gobernacíon filed with the Chamber of Deputies the necessary documents proving ratification, whereupon the deputies adopted, 79 to zero, an official declaration proclaiming the amendment properly approved. The Chamber then submitted the documents, along with its declaration, to the Senate, which unanimously approved a similar declaration on December 31, 1946.[21] Thus in the space of one month Alemán secured the amendment of the Constitution to grant women equal political rights with men in municipal elections.

Women immediately began to anticipate a more active role in Mexican politics and President Alemán stated that he regarded the amendment of Article 115 as only the first step in the granting of full political rights to women. The PRI established schools of civic and political instruction in the important cities to instruct women in the exercise of their newly acquired political rights. The Señoritas Ramírez, Señorita Aurora Fernández, Señora Castillo Ledón, and others received appointment to government jobs, mainly

in the Federal District. Prominent women of all important political groups expressed satisfaction that the first important official step had been taken to remove political discriminations against women.[22] The government established various agencies and clinics, mainly in the Federal District to serve the needs of women and doña Beatriz Velasco de Alemán, who had been politically active since the start of her husband's campaign for the presidency, inaugurated a number of centers for working women.[23] The number of women in diplomatic posts and the number chosen to represent Mexico on various international commissions slowly increased. A number of signs began to point to the next presidential election as one in which women might hope to triumph in their long struggle for equal political rights.

But disappointingly meager results during the rest of Alemán's presidential term counterbalanced the feminine hopes raised by winning local political rights. Appointed to municipal councils in the Federal District accounted for most of the feminine participation in local government. The election of Sunday, December 5, 1948, for the post of president of the municipal council of the important industrial city of Monterrey, with women participating for the first time, resulted in the so-called "Battle of Monterrey." Strong clerical and anticlerical forces faced each other in the electoral struggle for the capital city of the state of Nuevo León. Señor Félix González Salinas, the municipal president, much intimidated by clerical influence, permitted the Church to participate actively in the campaign so that the PAN candidate, don José Guadalupe Martínez, was openly referred to as a nominee of the Archbishop of Monterrey, Monsignor Guillermo Trischler y Cárdova, and other active members of the *regiomontañista* clergy. The announced election returns resulted in 32,000 votes for the PRI candidate, Señor Santos Cantú Salinas, 7,000 of these cast by women, as opposed to 20,000 for his opponent, who received 14,000 or twice the number of feminine votes and only 6,000 male votes.[24] The PRI, instructed by this experience, apparently did not nominate any women as local deputies so that no women gained seats in the state legislatures at this time.

Women, however, registered some legal and political gains after they received local political rights in the opening days of the Alemán administration. Amendments to the labor and social security

laws in 1947 extended some additional maternity benefits. In April of 1950, Alemán approved a project sponsored by the CNC to grant women residents of rural communities the same rights to land ownership and credit facilities as those already enjoyed by men.[25] But the PRI neglected the promotion of women's rights following the adoption of Alemán's amendment. General Rodolfo Sánchez Taboada, president of the PRI, in his speech at the Palace of Fine Arts on November 20, 1948, in honor of the 38th anniversary of the outbreak of the Revolution, did not even mention women's rights as he traced the Revolution from its beginnings to its culmination in the regime of Miguel Alemán. The Central Executive Committee of the PRI treated women's rights with equal neglect in a statement of principles issued in March of 1949 in preparation for the coming congressional elections.[26] On the other hand, the People's Party (PP), organized in 1948 by Vicente Lombardo Toledano, posed as the champion of the feminine cause. At its constitutional assembly in Mexico City in June, 1948, it adopted a program which devoted an article to the rights of women. Article 5 of the platform committed the PP "to fight for the removal of all those obstacles in the law, customs and practices which oppose full equality of rights and opportunities between men and women."[27] The PP thus served notice to the PRI that it intended to make a campaign issue of equal political rights for women in the 1952 presidential election.

Electoral reforms and proposals during the remainder of Alemán's presidency made no further concessions to women. The reform of the electoral law, published February 12, 1949, strengthened the control of the national government over political party activity, but repeated the requirements for voting in national elections with the monotony of a phonograph with its needle stuck. "Those Mexican men are electors who are 18 years of age or over if married and 21 years or over if not, who are in the enjoyment of their political rights and have signed in the electoral list."[28] Senator Juan Manuel Elizondo, of the PP, often spoken of as a pro-Communist party, introduced electoral reforms in 1950 and 1951 with the stated purpose of encouraging the formation of national political parties in Mexico. He proposed to prohibit Mexican political parties from owing allegiance to or being affiliated with any international organization, with the possible purpose

of convincing the critics of the PP that it was really a Mexican party. Whatever his purpose, his proposal repeated word for word the qualifications for voting in national elections in the Electoral Law of February 12, 1949, just mentioned, despite the supposed championship of women's rights by the PP. The 1951 version of Senator Elizondo's proposal actually passed the Chamber of Deputies in November, but was defeated in the Senate in December, because of its proportional representation arrangements.[29] Neither version of these proposed reforms nor the debates in Congress made any mention of woman suffrage. The Alemán administration thus ended on a note of disappointment for the feminine politicians.

Chapter 6

POLITICALLY EQUAL

THE CAUSE OF WOMAN SUFFRAGE needed another champion, like Cárdenas, who was convinced of its rightness. Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, like Alemán a Veracruzano, a former revolutionary army officer turned civilian, Minister of Gobernación and presidential aspirant, proved to be the needed champion. Both Señor Ruiz Cortines and his wife, Señora doña María Izaguirre de Ruiz Cortines, seem to have sincerely and consistently supported equal political rights for women. His post of Minister of Gobernación made him, by custom, almost an "heir apparent" to succeed Alemán, so that circumstances certainly did not require him to be a crusader in the cause of women's rights. Nevertheless, even before his nomination as presidential candidate he began to make statements in favor of equal political rights for women. As early as October, 1951, he expressed himself clearly and publicly on the subject: "The Mexican woman, example of unselfishness, industriousness, and morality, shall receive every stimulation and assistance for her growing participation in the political life of Mexico."[1] Again, in November, he stated unequivocally that "the growing intervention of Mexican women in national problems will permit more just solutions by establishing at the very foundation of these questions a new outlook concerning the purpose of public institutions."[2]

His nomination as official presidential candidate of the PRI in December, 1951, enabled Ruiz Cortines to make his support of women's rights more specific. Point 9 of the platform under which he accepted the nomination unquestionably expressed his sentiments: "Reform of feminine affairs so that women may enjoy the

same civic rights as men and the termination of odious inequalities which are repudiated by science."[3] Hardly was his campaign under way in January, 1952, before he returned again to the subject. "The Mexican woman has participated in the struggles for liberty, but more important, she is always present, unselfish and inspiring, in the daily struggle for life. It is our intention to give greater participation to women in the social, economic, and political life of Mexico."[4] Speaking in Morelia, capital of the state of Michoacán, he said: "I wish to insist once more that it is imperative to stimulate and aid the Mexican woman in order that she may participate increasingly in political life, as she has participated always, in an effective manner, in social and economic life."[5] At the height of his campaign in April in Mexico City, he said: "Women of Mexico, receive the fullest homage to your virtues and the expression of our firm conviction that, for the prosperity of the fatherland, the participation of women in the national life is necessary." He expressed his gratitude for the continued support of women's organizations. "I treasure the constant interest expressed by the feminine groups of the country. If the popular vote is favorable in the forthcoming elections, I will initiate before the Chambers the necessary legal reforms in order that the Mexican woman may enjoy the same rights as the man."[6]

Numerous women's organizations supported the candidacy of Ruiz Cortines. In addition to the Feminine Action section of the party these included the CNC under the leadership of Señorita Consuelo Esquivel, the Feminine Action of the CTM headed by Señorita Aurora Fernández, and the National Confederation of Popular Organizations (CNOP) led by Señorita Blanca Nieves Capdevilla, all coordinated, at least in theory, by the Revolutionary Federation of Mexican Women under the able guidance of Señora Castillo Ledón.[7] The championship of women's rights by Ruiz Cortines and the impressive display of feminine activity in his behalf forced the other political parties also to take action on women's rights. The program of the PP under the leadership of Lombardo Toledano favored the official proclamation of the woman suffrage amendment approved but not proclaimed in 1937 under Cárdenas. In 1952, however, anti-Russian sentiment had grown strong, and consequently Lombardo Toledano and his left-wing PP no longer enjoyed much popularity. Some of the left-wing

groups, therefore, decided to consolidate with the Federation of Parties of the Mexican People (FPPM) in support of the candidacy of General Miguel Henríquez Guzmán. The Federation included in its platform the plank in favor of proclaiming the woman suffrage reform of 1937, but otherwise had a rather confused program and a following more personal than ideological.[8] Consequently it welcomed dramatic incidents as a means of gaining attention.

The candidate of the FPPM in Michoacán, Licenciado Ezequiel Burquete, announced late in May, 1952, his support of the candidacy of a certain Señora Paz for the post of national deputy from Ciudad Hidalgo, Michoacán. He then called upon all the women in the state to register to vote for Sra. Paz and the Federation. Licenciado Ernesto P. Uruchurtu, Minister of Gobernación, pointed out, when he learned of the maneuvers of the Federation, that since the electoral law did not provide for woman suffrage in national elections the women could not legally register, vote, or run for office. Candidate Burquete then made a great show of accepting the decision of the Minister of Gobernación, but announced immediately in favor of woman suffrage.[9] He apparently hoped that this dramatic incident would antagonize the strong feminine support of Ruiz Cortines and the PRI. This incident may have gained some feminine support for the Federation, but the large number of voters not satisfied with any of the regular parties and the vigorous, at times violent, leadership of Henríquez Guzmán probably did more to account for the slightly over half a million votes which he received in the election.[10]

The PAN and the other conservative opposition groups united behind the candidacy of Efraín González Luna. It established a Woman's section directed by Señora Yarza de Ayala which carried on an active campaign in favor of González Luna and advocated feminine participation in politics. The PAN candidates frequently asserted that their party had insisted consistently since its foundation, in 1939, that the Cárdenas woman suffrage amendment should be put into operation by official proclamation of Congress. The fact that the PAN deputies had voted against the Alemán reform of December, 1946, cast some doubt upon the sincerity of these assertions. When newsmen raised this question at a press interview in June, 1952, Licenciado Cossío y Cosío, the PAN representative present, immediately stated: "My party and I personally have

insisted on the necessity of reforming the Constitution in order that women may have equal rights with men to vote and be voted for."[11] This effort of the PAN to popularize itself by advocating women's rights and by feminine activity in the election produced even smaller results in the final tally of votes than those of the more radical Federation. The official count credited candidate González Luna with only 285,555 votes. In local elections PAN fared somewhat better by electing five members of the Chamber of Deputies. The opposition parties, although of contrary political extremes, all claimed to favor putting woman suffrage into effect by congressional proclamation of the Cárdenas amendment. Altogether, however, they polled less than a million votes as against almost three million for Ruiz Cortines.[12]

President-elect Ruiz Cortines made it clear that he intended to submit woman suffrage proposals to Congress as soon as he took office. He took the oath of allegiance and assumed office at a formal ceremony held at the Palace of Fine Arts on the morning of December 2, 1952. Point 11 of his 17-point inaugural address dealt with women's rights. "The special problems of women in education, labor, and social security will be given careful attention; and in relation to their participation in the public life of the country, I am proposing to our sovereign authority the legal reforms necessary for them to enjoy the same political rights as men."[13] He indicated these proposals had already been prepared and would be submitted to Congress as soon as possible. The proposed reforms bore the same date as his inauguration, December 2, but the Minister of Gobernación did not actually transmit them to the secretaries of the two houses until December 9.[14]

The Ruiz Cortines amendment, like that of Cárdenas in 1937, included women specifically in Article 34, which defined citizenship.

> Article I — Article 34 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States is reformed in the following terms:
>
> Article 34 — Those men and women are citizens of the Republic, who, having the quality of Mexicans, possess also the following requisites:
>
> I — Are 18 years of age or over if married and 21 or over if not, and
>
> II — Have an honest means of livelihood.[15]

The Ruiz Cortines version omitted the word "all" and used the

word *varones* instead of the word *hombres* which in English is equivalent to saying males instead of men. Otherwise the two versions had the same identical text word for word. The change of "men" to "males" made an insignificant editorial alteration to conform to the wording of the electoral law. President Ruiz Cortines also included a proposed alteration of Article 115 which would leave it in the same form in which it originally appeared in the Constitution. His proposal, which specifically included women in Article 34, would, if adopted, make unnecessary the Alemán amendment of Article 115, which gave women the right to vote in municipal elections. A second paragraph added to Section I of Article 115, in 1946, provided: "In municipal elections the women shall participate, under equality of conditions with men, with the right to vote and be voted for."[16] The amendment submitted by Ruiz Cortines proposed to eliminate this paragraph for purposes of editorial harmony and economy.

The statement of reasons accompanying the proposal of President Ruiz Cortines clearly indicated his opinions on the subject of woman suffrage. The more important reasons included made a strong case:

> Considering that Mexican women generously and unselfishly have given their valiant support to the most noble causes, sharing the perils and responsibilities of the men, helping them in their work and inculcating in their children those moral principles which have been the firm basis of the Mexican family;
>
> Considering that, since the Revolution, conscious of their high mission in the vicissitudes of our struggle for liberty, women have succeeded in obtaining a cultural, political, and economic training similar to that of men, which capacitates them to take an effective and active part in the destinies of Mexico;
>
> Considering that I have always carried the conviction that Mexican women, examples of self-sacrifice, of industriousness, and of good morals, should receive stimulus and help for their increasing participation in the political life of the country, and that during the past electoral campaign, I have announced this sentiment, not only to feminist organizations, but to all social groups, there has been manifest an atmosphere notably favorable to the proposal to prepare both men and women for the exercise of their political rights;
>
> Considering also that the participation of women in munici-

> pal elections has resulted favorably, I judge it convenient to reform Article 34 of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, with the object of conceding them equal political rights with men.[17]

This strong presidential statement accompanying his proposed amendment seemed calculated to produce favorable action. The addition of this amendment to the Constitution unquestionably would be a great political victory for Ruiz Cortines and the PRI.

The PAN and the PP, in an effort to divide the feminine support of the PRI, combined in support of a proposal to have Congress merely proclaim the amendment to Article 34 proposed by Cárdenas in 1937 and ratified by the states by 1939. The PAN and PP members argued that the proclamation of the 1937 amendment would make it a part of the Constitution without the delay of having Congress adopt and the state legislatures ratify an identical amendment which Congress would then also have to proclaim. It would also, incidentally, deprive Ruiz Cortines and the PRI of credit for the woman suffrage amendment. The five PAN deputies therefore hastened to submit their proposal to the Chamber of Deputies on December 4, 1952, after the text of the new President's proposal became known but before the Minister of Gobernación completed the formality of officially submitting it to Congress on December 9.[18]

The statement of reasons which accompanied the PAN proposal contained arguments which revealed their purpose of discrediting Ruiz Cortines and the PRI.

> The reform of Article 34 of the Federal Constitution, initiated by the Executive in the year of 1937, was approved by both Chambers, and by the legislatures of the states, and in consequence the fundamental requirements for it to become effective have been fulfilled and only the computation of the votes and the proclamation provided by Article 135 of the same constitution are lacking. . . .
>
> The National Action party has been insisting since its foundation, through its deputies, that this reform should be put into force at once, because it is convinced of the capacity of women and of their fruitful participation in the life of the country, and we speak now to reiterate this opinion.
>
> We propose, in effect, as provided by Article 58 of the

> Interior Rules of the Congress, that this proposal shall be read in this same session and that Señor Deputy Eugenio Ibarrola be given the right to speak in support of it, and in case any orator signs to speak against, in accord with this same article after the orator opposes it, Señor Licenciado and Deputy Manuel Aguilar y Salazar shall be conceded the right to speak in favor.[19]

This maneuver was clearly intended to put the PRI delegates in the position of having to debate and vote against the Cárdenas amendment in order later to support the identical Ruiz Cortines amendment. It would also give two PAN deputies the opportunity to be the first members of the XLII Congress to speak in favor of woman suffrage.

The safe majority of the PRI on the two committees, the First Committee on Gobernación and the First Committee on Constitutional Questions, which united for the consideration of the President's proposals, prevented the Chamber from being faced with PAN's embarrassing motion. The committee hearings brought out many of the important feminist leaders who spoke in favor of the Ruiz Cortines proposals at the committee session held on the evening of December 9, 1952. Dr. Ester Chapa, however, the first to testify, favored proclaiming the Cárdenas amendment at once and thus immediately give women equal political rights with men. Dr. Chapa, referred to as "an important member of the Communist party of Mexico" and "a well-known Stalinist," rendered great homage to Lázaro Cárdenas as the initiator of woman suffrage. Esperanza Balmaceda, previously referred to by Portes Gil as another Communist, warmly seconded the remarks of Dr. Chapa. Blanca Capdevilla, head of the Feminine section of the PRI, spoke in favor of the Ruis Cortines proposals and, with the support of Delores Heduán and Aurora Méndez, urged the deputies to act on these reforms during the month of December. Matilde Rodríguez Cabo, now the "ex-wife of General Francisco J. Múgica," also favored the Ruiz Cortines proposals, but insisted that women must be adequately prepared for their civic rights. Doctor Treviño Zapata, chairman of the united committee, replied that he and his colleagues felt obligated to determine the best form in which to submit the woman suffrage proposals in the shortest time possible.[20]

Spurred by the testimony of the feminists, the united committees reported to the Chamber of Deputies on December 11, 1952. Five of the six committee members signed the report, but Francisco Chávez González, a member of the First Committee on Constitutional Questions, and the only PAN deputy on the two committees, refused to sign in order to support the proposal submitted by the PAN deputies on December 4. The joint committee introduced its report with an eleven-point statement of reasons. This statement supported the President's assertion that women had now become fully integrated into the economic and cultural life of the nation; and that they had already demonstrated their political capacity by participating in local elections since 1946. Point IV correctly insisted that to proclaim the 1937 amendment without also restoring Article 115 to its original form would be a contradiction. The statement acknowledged the popularity of woman suffrage proposals because all the political parties participating in the recent election included support for women's rights in their programs. It went on to say that the election of Ruiz Cortines to the presidency on a platform which specifically included a promise of woman suffrage reforms proved this popularity and entitled his proposals to first consideration.[21] The committee then submitted to the Chamber the Ruiz Cortines proposals word for word.

Francisco Chávez González presented his separate dissenting opinion on December 17, 1952, to accompany the committee report. In his "voto particular" against the report of the committee, Licenciado Chávez González denounced the effort of the PRI to gain partisan advantage from this reform and strongly implied that the government party had been very lax in not putting it into effect much earlier. The separate opinion contained six points: I. The PAN since its formation in 1939 has continually favored and worked for the participation of women in the decision of national problems. II. The report of the united committees presents an unhistorical and partisan view of the problem. "It is inadmissable to pretend to give to this participation the appearance of a concession or conquest of one political party." Mexican women have now the same great virtues they have always had so that the right to participate in public life might have been given to them at any time. III. In fact, it is a violation of constitutional principles not to proclaim at once the reform of 1937 which was adopted by the

Congress and ratified by the states. IV. At the same time this reform is proclaimed, the paragraph granting women the right to vote in municipal elections can also be declared eliminated from Article 115. V. Many of the local legislatures have been intolerably lax by refusing to incorporate the reform of Article 115 into their local constitutions and legislation. VI. The other members of the PAN in the Chamber of Deputies join in this opinion.[22]

The Chamber of Deputies discussed the committee report on December 22, 1952. Representatives of all the important feminine organizations attended, including even a group of women of the Mexican Catholic Action. Seven deputies participated in the debate with three in opposition – two from the PAN and one from the PP. Of the four who supported the report, three were from the PRI and one from the Nationalist party (PNM). Deputy Francisco Chávez González of the PAN initiated the debate speaking in favor of the separate report that he and the other PAN deputies had submitted to the Chamber on December 4. His debate added nothing to the six points of the separate report on which it was based but did add some details about the support of the PAN deputies for the Cárdenas amendment after the 1940 and 1943 elections. He naturally failed to mention that at that time the PAN seemed likely to gain through conservative control of feminine votes, whereas the PAN opposed the 1946 and 1952 reforms through which the PRI regained influence over a majority of the women interested in politics. Felipe Gómez Mont, the other PAN deputy who participated in the debate, seconded the sentiments of Chávez González and in his concluding remarks clearly revealed his intentions: "Once again I insist that woman suffrage and her capacity to be voted for must not and should not be the banner of one party or of one man."[23]

The political maneuver represented by the separate report and the debates of the PAN deputies apparently did not arouse the popular support anticipated. Antonio Ponce Lagos, a PNM deputy, remarked: "It must be noted that the orators of National Action were applauded only by the group of their party which occupied a part of the galleries and not by the assembly and that the other orators were applauded by all the assembly of deputies and the groups which occupied the boxes and the galleries."[24] This may help to account for the failure of the PAN deputies to maintain

their solid opposition to the Ruiz Cortines proposals. The only other opposing speaker, Deputy Professor Máximo Gámiz Fernández of the PP, favored amending Article 34 to grant men and women full citizenship rights at 18 years of age without regard to whether they were married or single. This effort of the radical left wing to attract Mexican youth to its banner did not secure the support of even the other PP deputy. The debate in support of this proposal, however, did give Deputy Gámiz Fernández an opportunity to make some very cutting remarks in exposing the position of the PAN deputies. He asserted:

> The novelty of this historical meeting is given by the representatives of National Action, who in 1939 were fighting for woman suffrage, and if they thus requested it they did so because they had the hope or the belief that the Mexican woman could be led to pursue the road of counterrevolution, because they thought that the Mexican woman would place herself in their group, the negative reaction, in order to be brought to give a treasonable blow to the Mexican Revolution itself.[25]

Three PRI deputies, Manuel Hinojosa Ortiz, Ramón Cabrera Cosío, and Juan Sabines Gutiérrez, spoke in favor of the committee report recommending the Ruiz Cortines proposals. Señor Hinojosa Ortiz observed that when the makers of the 1917 Constitution rejected property qualifications and other limitations on suffrage it became clear that women would win the right to vote as soon as they became interested and informed in politics. He felt that the opposition was insincere in pretending to favor the immediate grant of woman suffrage because it had not worked to qualify women for political rights as the followers of the Revolution had, by encouraging feminine participation in labor unions, in boards of arbitration and conciliation, in agricultural reform, and in the social regulation of national wealth and natural resources. He hit directly at PAN opposition to social reforms when he said that women would bring into politics an unselfish serenity "which must be cultivated by means of the equitable distribution of public wealth, because luxury, waste, and the excessive vanity of riches are among the sins against democracy." He concluded with glowing words of confidence in feminine political activity.

Those who think that the woman will be the docile instru-

> ment of conservative tendencies will be completely mistaken and I will set them straight. . . . Now, gentlemen, I am sure that this woman laborer, this woman farmer, who forms the great majority of the opinion of her group, must necessarily and inescapably go along with the interests of the people of Mexico because for more than a hundred years she has been going side by side with the soldier who has realized the greatest social and revolutionary conquests of the Mexican people.[26]

Deputy Juan Sabines Gutiérrez contented himself with a brief statement in support of the President's proposal. He pointed out that in the state of Chiapas women had been enjoying equal political rights with men for almost 30 years. In his state there had been two women deputies who had responded with the same honorableness as the other deputies to the principles of equality and popular responsibility. Deputy Ramón Cabrera Cosío, the only member of the combined committees to speak in favor of the report, made the longest speech. Licenciado Cabrera C. paid sincere tribute to the serious nature of the proposals of the PP member in favor of suffrage for all 18-year-olds and his honest hard work in support of this proposal. He then turned to a biting criticism of the tactics of the PAN. He accused the PAN deputies of ridiculing the Alemán reform of Article 115, which was a legally adopted part of the Constitution that they had sworn to uphold and support, and of pretending to uphold the Cárdenas reform although it never legally became a part of the Constitution. When PAN Deputy Chávez González interrupted him, he replied sarcastically: "And now, the enemy number one of Cardenism, who has just spoken, seeks to justify a proposal of the very same Cardenism to which he caused such damage."[27] He then pointed out the defects of the proposal of the PAN deputies on December 4, 1952.

> Let us look at a defect which is also a matter of public knowledge; when on the first day of December they attended the inauguration of the President of the Republic, they knew that señor President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines was initiating a reform to concede the vote to women. Consequently, wishing to take advantage of any opportunity, they attempted to present a reform anticipating that of the President of the Republic, although he had initiated his on the day of the first; that is to say they wished to use the opportunity to make a counterthrust.[28]

Licenciado Cabrera C. concluded with an examination of the main objections to woman suffrage which the committee had received. He listed these objections under four headings: first, lack of feminine preparation; second, disuniting of the family; third, exposing women to corruption in politics; fourth, fanaticism. In answer to the first objection he said that many men were also not well prepared to take part in politics and that women were about as well prepared as men. He answered the second by asserting that many things tend to disunite the family and that political activity alone would not disturb an otherwise united family. He countered the third objection by holding the men responsible for corruption in politics and asserting that women might tend to clean up politics and make it less corrupt. He dispelled the last objection by simply asserting that fanaticism did not exist in Mexican politics. His remarks concluded the case for the PRI in favor of the report and also terminated the debates.[29] The only other speech in favor of the report, that of the PNM member, Deputy Antonio Ponce Lagos, preceded the remarks of Deputy Gámiz Fernández.

Licenciado Antonio Ponce Lagos, deputy from the fifth electoral district of the state of Hidalgo, was the only non-PRI member who supported fully the Ruiz Cortines reforms in the debates in the Chamber on December 22, 1952. He proved himself to be quite an orator in his remarks, which first accused the PAN of inconsistency and then insisted that Mexican women were fully prepared to participate in politics. He asserted that the PAN deputies spoke always in the name of their party and never in the name of the people, that they pretended to favor woman suffrage but at the same time spoke and voted against it in the Chamber of Deputies as a means of depriving the President of the credit for this reform. "Thus gentlemen, they are unjust because they attempt to deprive our new President, don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, of the credit he deserves."[30] He regarded the recognition of civic rights for women as an act of justice in return for the great services which they have given the Mexican nation. He concluded with a flourish:

> Today we turn a new page in order to take this woman by the hand not only to lead her to the altar, not only to produce children, not only to accept her as a laborer, but take her hand

to lead her to the electoral urn in order that she may aid in providing a better future for our own children.

I can say to the women of Mexico: Enter into this new life, enter into this new responsibility and fulfill your duty as a Mexican despite the continuance of a haughty reaction intoning, with its classical quintet, the ancient music of long ago.[31]

The Chamber considered the subject sufficiently discussed at the conclusion of the remarks by committee-member Deputy Ramón Cosío, and the voting commenced, first on the general subject and second on the provisions themselves. The vote on the general subject of the reform was 135 in favor and 4 opposed. When the secretary read the proposed reforms, article by article, no one requested to vote on each article separately and consequently the Chamber approved the proposed amendments to Articles 34 and 115 together by a vote of 138 to 1 and immediately forwarded them to the Senate.[32] The Senate committees which received these proposals had the same designations as the committees which considered them in the Chamber of Deputies: First Committee on Constitutional Questions and First Committee on Gobernación, each with three members. The joint Senate committee made its report only two days later, on December 24. It was very similar to the report made by the united committees of the Chamber of Deputies on December 11. It pointed out that many of the senators had supported woman suffrage in their campaigns and had been elected; consequently, the committees felt obligated to submit the proposed reforms at once for the consideration of the Senate.[33] The proposed amendment in the report of the Senate committees preserved the identical text of that first presented by the President and then transmitted from the Chamber of Deputies to the Senate.

In the Senate, only Licenciado Aquiles Elorduy, senator from Aguascalientes and former member of the PAN, who as a deputy in 1946 had asserted his unalterable opposition to woman suffrage, spoke against the proposed reforms, after a special ruling opened the subject for discussion. Senator Elorduy affirmed the ability and preparation of Mexican women but said he feared that participation in politics would interfere with the care and administration of the home and therefore disrupt the Mexican family, which was the foundation of the nation. He asserted that women already directed their homes and administered family finances and therefore

did not need to participate in politics to exert their influence. He also feared the influence of the Roman Catholic Church over the political actions of Mexican women because "90 per cent of the feminine sex are Catholics whereas in the masculine sex it does not come to more than 50 per cent." He even foresaw the horrible prospect that the head of Catholic Action might become President of the Republic and erase from the Constitution Article 3 and other secular reforms.[34]

Luis I. Rodríguez, former personal secretary to President Cárdenas and later president of the Executive Committee of the PNR, now senator from Guanajuato, made a lengthy and well-reasoned rebuttal to the arguments of Senator Elorduy. He said that he felt the disruption of the home was an international phenomenon due to the great wars and revolutions which the world had been going through in the twentieth century and had little direct relation to the participation of women in politics. He gave a dramatic picture of the disruption of the home in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere caused by the terrible events of the Spanish Revolution and World War II and said that he felt the heroic role of women in the struggle for liberty entitled them to participate in politics. He doubted clerical influence in feminine politics in Mexico "because the influence which the clergy may have on the opinion of our women is now very indirect particularly in politico-social matters." He concluded by facing the really fundamental question in the whole debate: would the PRI be able to control a majority of the feminine vote?

> The enthusiastic response which we have received from them in our campaigns for the Senate of the Republic confirms my thesis. If we are to be found in this place discharging the high post of popular election, it is because in the referendum the national will has chosen our party in the loyal and honorable struggle with its opponents. . . .
>
> We will continue to hold the public power in our hands as long as we can hold the confidence of our electors, and if some day we should lose it, this will not be because of feminine opposition, but because we will have betrayed popular desires.

Once he had answered this question in the affirmative he felt that all doubts about supporting the reform should be removed. "If

in truth we love democracy we will equalize the conditions of all our fellow citizens."[35]

Senator Lauro G. Caloca in a somewhat rambling speech supported Senator Luis I. Rodríguez. His remarks produced a rebuttal from Senator Aquiles Elorduy. In his rebuttal Senator Elorduy pointed out some of the most obvious inconsistencies of his opponent's remarks, but added nothing further to the debate. Senator Pedro de Alba, also of Aguascalientes, concluded the debate by pointing out that, although both Mexican religion and Mexican politics had been much embittered by the long struggle to separate Church and State, this separation had now triumphed and could not be reversed. He therefore discounted fear of clerical domination of feminine votes. He noted that this fear accounted for one of Mexico's most serious embarrassments in international affairs, that of proclaiming human rights in all international dealings and protesting against all discriminations because of color, language, religion, or sex and at the same time denying political rights to the feminine half of its citizens. He charged the leaders of the feminine movement in Mexico with the responsibility of seeing that the feminine vote should always be enlisted in the great cause of social justice.

> It is necessary to say to the intellectual women, directors of the labor and suffragist movements in Mexico, that they must assume a great responsibility; they must think particularly of farm women, the woman of the shops, the Indian woman who is always sacrificed, they must take her hand and be indefatigable in organizing the proletarian woman into units capable of going to the polls and winning the elections for the great cause of the social justice of Mexico.[36]

In other words, if the PRI expected to continue to control a majority of the feminine votes it was up to the feminine party workers to see that the women were organized into groups safely within the party fold.

The vote on the proposed reforms immediately followed the speech of Senator de Alba and resulted in 47 in favor to 1 against with 48 of the 56 senators present and voting in the single balloting which combined the article-by-article vote with that on the general principles.[37] The woman suffrage reforms of President Ruiz Cortines, with the consent of the Senate on the night before Christmas,

1952, cleared the first great hurdle — congressional approval — without any serious difficulty. Each of the two houses approved them by a vote well above the required two-thirds; consequently, the proposed amendments passed to the state legislatures strongly recommended for ratification. The state legislatures in Mexico, like their counterparts in the United States, have been prone to ratify the constitutional amendments proposed to them by Congress, with the important difference that in Mexico only a majority — at that time 15 — of the Mexican states must ratify whereas in the United States the Constitution requires ratification by three-fourths of the states — or 36 at the time of adoption of the woman suffrage amendment in 1919-1920. The amending process in Mexico is further simplified by the fact that many of the state legislative sessions coincide with the sessions of Congress. Thus, although the Ministry of Gobernación did not forward the proposed amendments to the legislatures until December 26, 1952, seven of them ratified in the five remaining days of December. By the end of January, 1953, 16 had ratified, and by May 1, 27 states — all but one — had ratified.[38] It was ironical that Michoacán should be the last to ratify, on August 27, just before the opening of the new sessions of Congress, because during the presidency of Lázaro Cárdenas many of the leaders of the battle for woman suffrage were "Michoacanese": Cárdenas himself, Francisco J. Múgica, María del Refugio García, Senator Soto Reyes, and others.

The political parties, hoping to squeeze any remaining political advantage out of the woman suffrage amendment, hastened to bid for popular attention while the state legislatures were still in the process of ratification. Lombardo Toledano, for the PP, was the first to be heard from. In an editorial published on January 17, 1953, he asserted that to refuse women the right to participate in political life would be an act of barbarism. He denied that women would be a conservative factor in politics because they would be organized into political parties like the men and become readily educated in politics, particularly if the PRI would relax its harsh one-party system.[39] The PRI, with its national convention only a few weeks away, could afford to ignore this jibe from the left. Although the official sessions of the national convention of the PRI did not open until February 5, the ladies brightened the preliminary festivities with a women's rally held in the National Palace of Fine

Arts on Wednesday, January 28, which was attended by some 4,000 women loyal to the PRI and to President Ruiz Cortines. The President was represented by his personal secretary, Licenciado Benito Coquet, who acknowledged speeches in the President's honor by Señora Amalia Castillo Ledón for the Revolutionary Federation of Women, Señorita Consuelo Esquivel for the CNC, Señorita Aurora Fernández for the CTM, and Señorita Blanca Nieves Capdevilla for the National Confederation of Popular Organizations.[40]

Señora Castillo Ledón said that "President Ruiz Cortines has broken the ancient tradition of prejudices and destroyed the stigma of political inferiority which has bound women . . . who are now hastening to receive their full citizenship in order to participate with full responsibility in the social struggle for the progress of Mexico." Señorita Esquivel affirmed that "the political rights which don Adolfo has now conceded to women are our arms with which to support the action of the workers of the field to vindicate themselves and to achieve the welfare to which they are entitled. Farm women will contribute with enthusiasm in the production of articles of primary necessity, following faithfully the leadership of the *Ruizcortinista* program." Señorita Fernández asserted that "the fact of being a citizen is not incompatible with the functions of women, whether to be a mother or a sister. We are deeply grateful for the proof of the confidence which the President of the Republic has in us." Señorita Capdevilla, not to be outdone, assured the assembly that "President Ruiz Cortines will be in the history of Mexico an example of high social conscience and unbreakable integrity."[41] When the session adjourned, the ladies told the newspaper reporters that the meeting was scheduled to coincide with similar feminine assemblies being held in the principal cities of the country.

General Gabriel Leyva Velázquez, president of the Central Executive Committee of the PRI, in an interview with the press on January 30 in anticipation of the party's coming national convention, outlined the reforms to be considered for inclusion in its program. Among the reforms mentioned, the party pledged itself to "the political education of women, resulting from the presidential proposal which has conceded to them full civic rights, and the adoption of measures designed to eliminate from existing laws all

dispositions which limit the juridic capacities of the women citizens."[42] Just as Señor Leyva Velázquez had promised, the party considered the problem of women's rights at its national convention held in the Palace of Fine Arts on February 5-7, 1953. The assembly approved the following "plank" in the party platform:

> Problems of women. a) To establish equality of opportunities for women in the conduct of popular elections. b) To banish all discriminations prejudicial to women in regard to technical, professional, or cultural preparation. c) To be vigilant for the faithful enforcement of the labor laws which relate to working mothers, and to support every proposal or effort tending to remedy all activities, occupations, customs, or circumstances which tend to degrade or prostitute women.[43]

In token of fulfillment of its promises the party fathers awarded Señora Castillo Ledón a seat of honor on the platform during the sessions of the party convention at which women were elected to three of the party's six vice-presidential posts. Thus the PRI served notice that it intended to strengthen its hold on the feminine voters.

The influence of the PRI over women's organizations, demonstrated through party rallies, and the ease with which party pressure secured ratification by the states gave the definite impression that the amendments granting women political rights would receive the required official proclamation by the two chambers of Congress. President Ruiz Cortines spoke with confidence on the subject in his annual message to Congress on September 1, 1953, in which women's rights received twenty-second place among the 24 subjects discussed.

> The Mexican woman will soon come to enjoy full political rights, because the constitutional reform approved by the Sovereign Congress has also received the approval of all the honorable state legislatures. We have inaugurated a force destined to complete the process of opening wide the heavy door of prejudice and thus to give them a greater participation in national constructive activity. We count upon their intelligence, upon their patriotism, and upon their wisdom to preserve, to dignify, and to improve the citizenry of which they form a part.[44]

Antonio Erales Abdelnur, deputy from Quintana Roo and president of the Chamber of Deputies, replied with full assurances of

congressional cooperation. "As the procedures prescribed by the Fundamental Charter for its own reform are nearing completion I am pleased to announce that the Congress of the Union is now ready to make the constitutional modification by which Mexican women will be granted full citizenship."[45]

Señora Castillo Ledón's note of pride could be pardoned when she referred to the progress of the woman suffrage campaign in Mexico in her presidential report to the Ninth Assembly of the Inter-American Commission of Women, meeting in Asunción, Paraguay, September 7-23, 1953, just after the opening of the Mexican Congress.

> In order to fulfill the function with which the Inter-American Commission of Women is charged by its Organic Statute, to "work for the extension of political rights to the women of America," and since the election of the President of the Republic, on July 6, 1952, was drawing near, I went to Mexico on January 6 of this year, in order to assume responsibility for the organization of the national campaign in favor of the recognition of the political rights of the Mexican woman, without any discrimination. For this purpose my personal campaign was supported by the press, the radio, and the feminine organizations of the country, federated into the "Alliance of the Women of Mexico," the strongest feminine organization which has so far fought for the recognition of the political rights of women on a national scale. . . .
>
> This work was amply rewarded, one week after the inauguration of the present administration, when the Chief of State sent to the Chambers his historic initiative of the reforms of Articles 34 and 115 of the Constitution, which recognized the suffrage rights of women on a national scale. The proposal was the first which his Excellency the President sent to the Mexican Congress.[46]

The Mexican legislators, she added, hastened to approve the President's proposal: the Chamber of Deputies unanimously on December 22, 1952, and the Senate a few days later with only one dissenting vote. Commission president Señora Castillo Ledón assured the assembled ladies at Asunción that a majority of the state legislatures had approved the amendment and that shortly Mexican women would at last enjoy complete political equality with men.

When the second session of the XLII Congress opened on September 1, 1953, it was generally known that all the state legislatures had ratified the proposed amendments to Articles 34 and 115 of the Constitution and that the recommendation for the formal declaration of adoption would soon come before Congress. The Ministry of Gobernación forwarded to the Senate the complete documentation of the ratification of the states, which referred it to the same combined committees, the First Committee on Constitutional Questions and the First Committee on Gobernación, which had considered the proposed amendments originally presented in December, 1952. The combined committees completed their work rapidly and reported the amendments to the Senate on September 23. The report summarized the status of the amending process and credited the reforms to President Ruiz Cortines.

> The declaration culminates the promise, which crystallizes the uniform thought of the nation, concurred in by the decision of the federal chambers and those of the legislatures of all of the states of the Republic, which was contained in the political platform of presidential candidate don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, one of whose first acts, on assuming the power which the people had conferred on him, was to present an initiative of constitutional reforms to elevate women to the active exercise of citizenship.[47]

On the following day, without further discussion, the Senate approved by a vote of 42 to 1 the declaration that the proposed amendments to Articles 34 and 115 were officially adopted. The senators, inspired by the historic occasion and the presence of the ladies in the galleries, invited Señora Castillo Ledón, who had flown back from Asunción, to speak from the tribune at the close of the session and thus conferred upon her the honor of being the first woman ever to address the Mexican Senate.[48]

The Senate transmitted its act with all the documentation to the Chamber of Deputies, which also used the same committees, the First Committee on Gobernación and the First Committee on Constitutional Questions, which had considered the subject in the previous session. On October 1, 1953, the committees submitted to the Chamber their five-point report which summarized the history of the amendments and recommended that the Chamber of Deputies concur with the Senate statement declaring them officially adopted.

The deputies took up the consideration of the committee report on October 6, concluded the debate, and cast their final vote this same day. The feminist leaders, sensing that this session of the Chamber would mark the final triumph of woman suffrage, attended in considerable numbers with colorful banners to mark their location in the galleries. The feminine groups attached to the PRI were very much in evidence to the great satisfaction of the officers of the party's National Executive Committee, who also were very conspicuously present.[49] A prolonged and at times heated debate took place which gave the impression that some of the more articulate deputies simply could not forego the opportunity to speak to such a large and attractive audience, on an occasion of such historical importance.

Only eight deputies participated in the final debate, five of them PRI members and three from other parties. Francisco Chávez González of PAN, Antonio Ponce Lagos of the PNM, and Máximo Gámiz Fernández of the PP spoke for the minority parties. The remarks of the speakers added little to what had already been said in the Chamber of Deputies on December 22, 1952, when the proposals first came up for discussion. The sentiment, now that all the state legislatures had ratified, overwhelmingly favored approval and the Chamber showed impatience with the delaying tactics of PAN Deputy Francisco Chávez González. PRI Deputy González Guevara asserted that when PAN was founded in 1939 "not one point nor one comma of its doctrine referred to the necessity of incorporating the Mexican woman into the civilization and culture of the nation." On the other hand the PNR, established ten years earlier, in 1929, included women's rights in its program which pledged: "It will aid and stimulate the full participation of the Mexican woman in the activities of the political life of Mexico."[50] These remarks of González Guevara produced an acrimonious argument with Deputy Chávez González, which the president of the Chamber finally terminated by invoking the rule against dialogues.

Deputy Zorilla Rivera, speaking for the Agrarian section of the PRI, asserted that the woman of the fields and the farms "will never be a peril to the progress of Mexico; on the contrary, she will be the guarantee that will maintain firm, unalterable, and immovable the principles of the Mexican Revolution for the good

of the fatherland."[51] Deputy Miguel García Cruz concluded the debates by pointing out that as presidential candidate, since April 6, 1952, Ruiz Cortines had consistently supported full political rights for women and had been overwhelmingly elected; consequently the legislative branch must join with him in making this reform effective. "This reform of Article 34 of the Constitution, will be the greatest political heritage which the regime of don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines and his forty-second legislature can leave for the posterity of Mexico."[52] Only Francisco Chávez Gonzáles spoke against the committee recommendation – but not as effectively as he had spoken in 1952. When, as a committee member, he tried to exercise his privilege of making the final rebuttal he was shouted down by the other deputies.

The president of the Chamber of Deputies called for the final vote on the proposed amendments to Articles 34 and 115 of the Constitution at the conclusion of the debates in the Chamber, October 6, 1953. The Chamber approved, by a vote of 98 to 0, each of the two amendments as well as the committee's recommendation that the Chamber of Deputies concur with the Senate in declaring the Constitution officially amended. The vote was recorded as unanimous.[53] Both houses adopted in the same form the declaratory statement which completed the amending process and which had been the only thing lacking in the 1937-38 amendment.

> THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES, IN THE USE OF THE POWERS CONCEDED TO IT BY ARTICLE 135 OF THE POLITICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES AND WITH THE PREVIOUS APPROVAL OF ALL THE HONORABLE LEGISLATURES OF THE STATES, DECLARES AMENDED ARTICLES 34 AND 115, SECTION I, OF THIS SAME CONSTITUTION.[54]

The five PAN deputies, all of whom signed the special PAN resolution of December 4, 1952, either voted in favor of the Ruiz Cortines amendments in 1953 or refrained from voting. They may have concluded that all possible political advantage had been derived from delaying tactics or proposed substitutions and that a vote against the final adoption of the amendments would injure rather than help their party. The text of the two amendments as finally adopted was word for word the same as presented by the President

in December, 1952, and repeated at every stage in the amending process.

The *Diario oficial* published, on October 17, 1953, the decree declaring the Constitution formally amended by the reform of Articles 34 and 115. Forwarded for publication by the Ministry of Gobernación, it read:

> Adolfo Ruiz Cortines, Constitutional President of the United Mexican States to its inhabitants, know ye:
>
> That the Honorable Congress of the Union has thought well to direct to me the following
>
> DECREE:
>
> The Congress of the United Mexican States, in the use of the powers conferred upon it by Article 135 of the General Constitution of the Republic and with the prior approval of a majority of the Honorable Legislatures of the States, declares reformed Articles 34 and 115, Section I, of this same Constitution to appear in the following form:
>
> Those men and women are citizens of the Republic, who, having the quality of Mexicans, possess also the following requisites:
>
> I – Are 18 years of age or over if married and 21 and over if not, and
>
> II – Have an honest means of livelihood.[55]

The decree then eliminated from Section I of Article 115 the provision of 1946 specifically granting women political rights in municipal elections, since the above amendment made this unnecessary because Article 35 specified the right to vote and to run for elective office among the rights of citizenship. After an intermittent struggle of some thirty years and a continuous struggle of about twenty years, Mexican women as last succeeded in eliminating from the national Constitution all discriminations, specific and implied, against equal political rights with men.

The proclamation of the constitutional amendments left only the alteration of the electoral law to complete the process of giving Mexican women equal rights with men to participate in politics. The revised electoral law, passed by Congress on December 31, 1953, accomplished this by simply omitting the word "males" from the voting requirements established in 1916. Article 60 of the law, which finally eliminated the last humiliating distinction, provided

that "all those Mexicans are electors who are 18 years of age or over if married and 21 or over if they are not, who are in full enjoyment of their political rights and who have signed the National Electoral Register."[56] With this alteration Mexican women achieved final and complete victory in their drive for the legal right to full political equality. Newspaper woman Adele Georgi aptly summarized this struggle after the first feminine triumph in 1946. "The extension of the vote to women is due, however, not to the efforts of any one person or group, but to a continuous pressure exerted by many people, notably women, throughout many generations."[57] Mexico thus became the seventeenth American state to grant full political rights to women. At this time only Colombia, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru continued to discriminate against women in national politics.[58] But it remained to be seen whether in Mexico, unlike in other countries where full political rights have been much longer established, women would achieve equal political participation and influence with men.

Chapter 7

FEMININE POLITICS IN PRACTICE

MEXICO HAS HAD only two general elections since the triumph of the long and painful process of constitutional and legal reform by which women gained equal political rights in 1952-1953. One state, however, Baja California Norte, held a special election in July, 1954, at the conclusion of the process of admission to the union as a new state. In this, its first state election, women participated equally with men in choosing a governor, a local legislature, and three members to Congress: two senators and one deputy. The local PRI, with the approval of headquarters in Mexico City, nominated Señora Licenciada Aurora Jiménez de Palacios, a locally prominent woman lawyer, as its candidate for deputy. Señora Jiménez de Palacios, a sincere and intelligent young woman, 28 years of age and the mother of three children, campaigned vigorously through the state advocating support of President Ruiz Cortines, equal sacrifices for all in adjusting to inflation, and better educational opportunities for the children of Baja California. Her candidacy proved so popular that the PP, the PRI's only opposition in the election, permitted her to run unopposed. Since the PRI, as had been generally anticipated, won all the seats in Congress, Señora Aurora Jiménez became the first woman member of the Mexican Congress, but only for the third year of the XLII Congress.[1] The legislative period of this session lasted only from September through December, 1954, although her term of office did not end until August, 1955. With the lines of control in Congress already formed and a short legislative term doña Aurora had little opportunity to gain any power as a legislative or political leader, although she served faithfully and with at least as much distinction as the average national deputy.

Señora Jiménez de Palacios went to Mexico City in August, 1954, and on August 30, after approval by the electoral committee of the Chamber, held an interview with representatives of the press in which she asserted that she would seek to achieve the greatest possible protection for children and the approval of a legal code for this purpose.[2] On September 7, when the Chamber officially seated her, she spoke of herself as a modest married woman who had to practice law to help maintain her family and insisted that she would continue to conduct herself in this manner. She admonished the politicians that in nominating women candidates they should take care to select only women of exemplary character for public office. "When the political parties nominate women candidates for popular election they should never forget that their feminine candidates should possess such moral virtues that in their public acts they will reaffirm the virtues possessed by the women of Mexico."[3] Doña Aurora received no important committee assignments, and the almost complete lack of news concerning her legislative career doubtless reflected her relatively minor legislative role. She probably supported the sanitary code enacted by this session of Congress and the measures dealing with juvenile problems as a part of the big PRI majority which adopted them. When the session adjourned, on December 31, 1954, the members asserted that the third session of the XLII Congress had made history because of the participation of Mexico's first woman deputy. Thus at the beginning and the end of the session she had her moment of glory as Mexico's first congresswoman.[4]

Women in the whole Republic enjoyed the same rights as men in the congressional elections in the summer of 1955, which filled all seats in the Chamber of Deputies for the next three years. They also participated equally in the presidential election in the summer of 1958 in which all 60 seats in the Senate and all 162 seats in the Chamber of Deputies also were at stake. Both elections were held under the Federal Electoral Law of December 31, 1953, which provided that all political parties participating in elections must fulfill certain requirements and be officially recognized. They must register their candidates in the spring of election years with a Federal Electoral Commission set up in the Ministry of Gobernación, composed of government officials and representatives of all the recognized political parties, with the Minister presiding.[5] Only

four parties participated in the 1955 national election: the PRI, the government party; the PAN, the conservative opposition party; the PNM, a regional nationalistic party; and the PP, a left-wing radical party.[6] The FPPM, which had provided a powerful opposition coalition in 1952 under the leadership of General Miguel Henríquez Guzmán, was not able to participate in the 1955 election: in February, 1954, the Minister of Gobernación cancelled recognition of the Federation because of violence in party activities and in local elections. It could no longer function as a political party and therefore had to dissolve.[7]

By the end of April, 1955, the political parties, in conformity with the electoral law, had registered their candidates with the Federal Electoral Commission. The four participating parties nominated only 14 women among 355 candidates for deputy and only 21 women in an equal number of candidates for alternate deputy. The PRI led the list with a total of 15 feminine candidates, 5 for deputy and 10 for alternate. Only 4 of the total of 14 women nominees for deputy and 9 of the total of 21 nominees for alternate won election to the Chamber, all candidates of the PRI. Only the PRI nominated feminine candidates for deputy and alternate for the same seat. It presented two such pairs; one successful, the other defeated. The defeated pair — or "sacrificed ones," as the Mexicans say — were Marta Andrade del Rosal and Fanny Schiller Hernández, deputy and alternate from the ninth electoral district of the Federal District. Thus only 4 women won seats as deputies among 161 members of the Chamber and only 9 women among an equal number of alternates. In table form, the results of the election, held in July, 1955, appear as follows:[8]

	Deputy		Alternate		Total Feminine Candidates	
Party	Nominated	Elected	Nominated	Elected	Nominated	Elected
PRI	5	4	10	9	15	13
PAN	3	0	4	0	7	0
PNM	2	0	1	0	3	0
PP	4	0	6	0	10	0
Total	14	4	21	9	35	13

No real doubts ever existed as to the results of the election of July, 1955. The PRI, as the official party, obviously could dominate the election as it had all elections since its foundation as the National Revolutionary party in 1929. With the authority of the electoral law of 1953 the government could easily exert more pressure on the election if needed. President Ruiz Cortines had three more years to serve, no Senate seats were at stake, and consequently the election produced no exciting conflicts and no large turnout of voters. None of the feminine candidates conducted particularly vigorous campaigns and the newspapers devoted little space to political activities preceding the election. The Alliance of Mexican Women, active in 1953 in coordinating the work of all feminine organizations in support of woman suffrage, no longer had a united goal for which to work. Its most prominent leader, Señora Amalia de Castillo Ledón, accepted appointment as Mexican ambassador to Sweden and later to Switzerland.[9] The feminine sections of the various political parties once more controlled feminine political activity. The Chamber of Deputies of the XLIII Congress gave no important committee assignments to its four women members and no measures which could be regarded as peculiarly of feminine interest came before it. Consequently women's organizations, the feminine vote, and the women members of Congress played no particularly outstanding role in 1955, 1956, or 1957.

The presidential election of 1958, however, offered heavy political stakes. Whoever won nomination by the PRI could control the party. Control of the PRI would be a virtual guarantee of election for a six-year term as the boss of Mexican politics. The election would also fill all 60 Senate seats and all 162 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Consequently the shock waves of the coming election began to be felt early in 1957 as the conservative *alemanista* and the revolutionary *cardenista* wings of the PRI began to maneuver for power with the hope of influencing the nomination.[10] In March of 1957, Lázaro Cárdenas, who had emerged from relative obscurity in 1956 to accept a somewhat belated award of the Stalin Peace Prize, journeyed to the northwest part of the Republic to get "a first hand impression of agricultural problems." His trip included Sonora, under the governorship of Alvaro Obregón, Jr., son of the revolutionary hero, and Baja California, where a booming cotton-raising industry had caused considerable agitation among

workers and had justified recognition, in 1951, of the northern part of the territory as Mexico's 29th state, the process of admission being completed in 1953. Cárdenas attended many meetings, listened to many complaints, and in Tiajuana granted a press interview which confirmed the impression that his visit had political significance. He called for the reorganization of the PRI and for much greater freedom of political activity. His remarks seemed critical of limitations on freedom of speech, the press, and assembly, and of PRI control of the organization of political parties and the nomination of candidates through the electoral law of 1953.[11]

Cárdenas, back in Mexico City in April, 1957, made two speeches considered to have some political significance. His speech at a celebration in honor of the Spanish Republic contained no direct references to Mexican politics, but the occasion of his appearance caused some comment. On April 20, speaking at a banquet at the school "For the Sons of Workers," he charged his listeners not to use their education to become part of a bureaucratic oligarchy of castes who take advantage of their professional knowledge only to enrich themselves.[12] Neither Miguel Alemán nor his followers made any direct public reply to the political rocket launched by Cárdenas. Alemán, who as President from 1946 to 1952 had sparked Mexico's postwar industrial boom and emerged as one of the hemisphere's richest men, favored a program more acceptable to the big bankers, foreign investors, and the growing group of Mexican big businessmen. He could not properly be considered subservient to international big business nor a proponent of foreign economic imperialism; rather, he supported a policy, similar to that of Alexander Hamilton in the early days of the United States, of national economic growth and development with government aid.

Cárdenas, whose support came mainly from the laborers and the peasants, felt that the policy of government stimulation of industry and of controlled inflation left these classes largely out of account. Alemán apparently preferred to exert his influence behind the scenes in the conviction that Ruiz Cortines would have the deciding vote in choosing his successor. The question of whether these differences within the party would lead to open conflict would obviously depend upon the President and the presidential candidate designated by the party. While anxious observers expressed concern at the possibility of an open clash over economic policy, no

difference between the two party leaders and their factions appeared on the subject of woman suffrage. In fact, both Cárdenas and Alemán, as candidates and as presidents, had championed women's rights and seemed to continue to support, possibly for different reasons, full feminine participation in politics.[13]

With so much at stake in the presidential election, whoever could influence the feminine vote would have a powerful ally. The PRI consequently took pains to reactivate its Feminine sector under the able leadership of Margarita García Flores, its representative on the Central Executive Committee of the party and also a member of the Chamber of Deputies from the fourth district of Nuevo León.[14] The Feminine sector organized regional committees in all parts of the Republic to coordinate feminine activity in behalf of the PRI, and as the campaign progressed a bewildering number of women's organizations appeared, such as the Central Feminine League of the Federal District, Political Ideals for Women, the National Confederation of Mexican Women, and others all more or less loosely tied to the PRI. The Mexican Confederation of Labor (CTM) under the presidency of Fidel Velásquez, a PRI party stalwart, organized the Federation of Organizations of Working Women as a regular member organization of the CTM – also, through it, represented in the Confederation of Popular Organizations of the PRI.[15] The PRI clearly began to move into position to strengthen its control over the feminine vote.

The first regular congress of the Federation of Working Women, held in Mexico City July 21-23, 1957, gave the PRI leaders an opportunity to show their interest in women's political activities. Ruiz Cortines, President of the Republic, Fidel Velásquez of the CTM, Adolfo López Mateos, Minister of Labor, and Margarita García Flores, all addressed the assembled ladies. Ruiz Cortines, who led the party parade to speak to the potential voters, asserted: "I have absolute faith in the women of Mexico, . . . symbol of patience, of abnegation, of determination, of organization, and in everything the companion of the men." Deputy Margarita García Flores, the last party speaker, urged the women to present a united front in support of the revolutionary governments of Mexico in order to overcome the difficulties which face the women of the nation. After hearing these and similar remarks, which sounded very much as if the women workers were being urged to support

the present leadership of the PRI, the ladies turned their attention to such problems as technical education and civic training for women and the protection of feminine health in industry, on which subjects they heard reports and adopted resolutions.[16]

As the time approached for the annual presidential message to the opening session of Congress, rumors and even occasional newspaper articles supported the belief that the PRI entertained considerable misgivings about the 1958 election. One editorial stated that the PRI still feared the influence of the clergy over the feminine vote and that one purpose of Cárdenas' renewed political activity was to counteract this influence.[17] In spite of this political uneasiness Ruiz Cortines, as the outstanding feature of his message to Congress delivered on September 1, 1957, gave his strong assurance that the coming elections would be free elections. He made one reference to woman suffrage clearly calculated to reassure the fearful on the subject of women in politics.

> As for the women, our Mexican women, they participated with us as citizens in the federal elections of 1955. Prior to that they participated in some of the states and now will be fully united with us in the elections of 1958. The Mexican women citizens merit the absolute confidence of the whole nation. With a profound and unshakeable conviction I affirm once more that they will never be misled from the principles consecrated in our Constitution which seek to improve the moral, civic, and material life of all Mexicans. They will continue to be the principal guardians of their homes as mothers, wives, and daughters; they will not be misled by mistaken assumptions; they understand well what are their obligations in order that they may dignify themselves as women and as citizens, for the autonomy of the family and for the sovereignty of the nation.[18]

When Congress held its first regular session on September 6, various members mounted the tribune to express their sentiments on the President's message. Among these, Deputy Marcelina Galindo Arce, staunch PRI member from Chiapas, where women had longest enjoyed full political rights, spoke in behalf of women. She seconded Ruiz Cortines' note of reassurance.

> I am certain that the women citizens of the Republic will respond to their hour of glory with the most faithful fulfillment

> of their duties which have been clearly outlined, not as a gift, but as a recognition of their capacity to share at the side of the men their high duties, their historic responsibility. They will not be false to the ties which link them to the home nor will they betray their voting rights as citizens.[19]

The President's assurance of free elections, however, elicited the most varied reactions: an unsuccessful bid by Miguel Henríquez Guzmán to re-establish the outlawed FPPM, as a militant coalition of dissatisfied elements; a statement of opposition by the young *cardenistas* to the candidacy of Ángel Carbajal, Minister of Gobernación, like Ruiz Cortines and Miguel Alemán a *Veracruzano,* but considered rather conservative and colorless; and a declaration of principles, published toward the end of the month, by the *cardenistas.* Three former PRI party presidents signed the declaration: General Heriberto Jara, who had been a radical member of the 1917 Constitutional Congress; Senator Luis I. Rodríguez, former personal secretary to Cárdenas; and Senator Silvano Barba González. The declaration, rather obviously calculated to influence the national PRI convention scheduled to meet in November, favored free debate of the qualifications of presidential candidates, more extensive land reform, increased educational facilities, a more equitable distribution of national wealth, and the nationalization of the foreign-owned electrical industry, but it contained no reference to woman suffrage.[20]

When the Grand Commission of the PRI, similar to the national committees of the Republican and Democratic parties in the United States, met in Mexico City the latter part of October, 1957, to designate the time and place of the national party convention, the favored presidential candidate still remained a well-kept secret. The commission set the convention for November 15-17 in Mexico City, while the commentators noted that only the President, Ruiz Cortines, could designate the party candidate – or, "unveil the party's hooded cock," *el tapado,* in the vividly descriptive Mexican political vocabulary – for the coming electoral contest. The President evidently gave his nod, because after some prodding General Agustín Olachea Aviles, president of the PRI Central Executive Committee, announced on November 3, just before the commission adjourned, that the party had selected Adolfo López Mateos, Minister of Labor, as its official candidate.[21] This caused consider-

able speculation that López Mateos, not then widely known outside government circles, was the compromise, or "dark horse," candidate nominated to avoid a power deadlock within the party.

The national party convention which met in the Colón Theater on November 15 served rather as an anticlimax since it could only obediently carry out the will of the President and the party leaders as indicated by the commission on November 3. None of the speeches or party actions produced any surprises. This left the acceptance speech of the candidate, on the last day, as the only dramatic event which the convention could produce. Party president General Olachea Aviles, who gave the opening address on the first morning to some 3,000 delegates and an equal number of party members, noted the large number of women present and felt impelled to refer to the party's achievement in promoting feminine participation in politics.

> Women exercise the right to vote in consequence of a constitutional reform proposed by our chief executive as an act of social justice. If this is not political progress then half of humanity is mistaken and the other half is incapacitated.
>
> We have accomplished by our actions the ever greater participation of women in the task of constructing a new Mexican nation sure of its future. A great number of militant women of our political party actually exercise posts of popular election in town councils, in the local legislatures, and in the Congress of the Union.[22]

The actual nomination of candidate López Mateos by unanimous acclamation took only twenty minutes on the morning of November 17, most of it devoted to the nomination speech of party official Luis Acheverría.[23] Then in token of the public significance of the nominee's acceptance speech the convention adjourned to the sports stadium of the "City of Sports," where appropriate ceremonies could be held and a large crowd could attend the acceptance address.

Those who, on the morning of November 17, 1957, listened to the speech, at the stadium in which López Mateos accepted the PRI nomination, may have been disappointed if they had hoped to hear something dramatic or exciting. He limited himself to some 36 rather closely-reasoned paragraphs mainly devoted to economic subjects, from which neither the *cardenistas* nor the

alemanistas could gather much comfort. He directed only two paragraphs of his speech to the feminine members of his audience.

> The women of Mexico, in whom the most steadfast and highest virtues are embodied, have likewise a lofty task. Vigilance over the moral heritage that strengthens Mexican homes and gives them stability is necessary to preserve and enrich our family life. As a people, we love our traditions and we have never disavowed our beliefs: this is the way we like to be and we shall continue to be. Mexico's spiritual gain depends upon our women, for it is in the home that the child, who becomes the citizen of tomorrow, learns and retains his permanent values: the sense of his own dignity and respect for the dignity of others; the concept of family unity; the love of his country as a common home; and the aspiration to seek his place in society along the path of righteousness, personal integrity, and public responsibility. Homes guided by a firm but generous mother, by tender sentiments, and noble ideals, will inevitably produce a better people, who will always be an honor to Mexico.
>
> Women are now for the first time entering upon a presidential campaign, as citizens enjoying the full civil rights granted them by the Revolution in a memorable act of justice, which granted them the dignity that was their due. The right to vote does not uproot women from family and home to lure them into politics. Rather, women's suffrage brings into the home a deeper understanding of great national issues, a daily inquiry on matters that are of concern to us all. This will prove once again that neither contentious preaching nor deceptive enticement can change women's most intimate sentiments or wean them away from their home and family. Now, the Mexican women too will be citizens working for their country. We must not distinguish them from men, except to honor them in greater measure.[24]

These remarks, which seemed to reflect the confidence of Ruiz Cortines that the majority of the feminine voters would support the PRI, constituted the candidate's opening bid for the women's vote in the presidential election of 1958.

As the candidate of the official party with all the prestige of the President and the resources of the government behind him and with the help of the highly organized PRI, which could count upon financial support from government employees and organized labor, Adolfo López Mateos hardly needed to make a vigorous

campaign. Nevertheless, he soon made it clear that he intended to contest other candidates for every vote in the Republic by engaging in one of the most gruelling and extensive campaigns ever undertaken by any candidate in any country in recent times. In the first five months of 1958 López Mateos visited every part of the nation and held rallies and made speeches in every major city and in hundreds of small towns and villages.[25] Doña Eva Sámano de López Mateos, at one time active in teachers' union affairs at Toluca, could not accompany her husband on most of his campaign trips because her health would not permit the strain, but she could make the most of her position as faithful wife and mother of a teen-age daughter — a role which might prove more attractive to the women voters than that of an active feminine politician helping her husband campaign for office.

The campaign technique of candidate López Mateos soon developed a fairly definite pattern which always included some conspicuous appeal for the feminine vote. He selected the prominent politicians of each locality as part of his official party while traveling in a particular region, often including an outstanding woman politician. For example, he chose María Guadalupe Martínez Hernández Loza, secretary for Political Subjects of the Federation of Feminine Organizations of the Republic, as the feminine delegate with his official party on his trip through Guanajuato. Dolores Álvarez Bravo served as the feminine delegate with his official party when he campaigned in the state of Jalisco. Margarita García Flores, director of the Feminine Action of the Central Executive Committee of the PRI, accompanied his official party on its trip through Tamaulipas.[26] He always entered each city accompanied by a bevy of beautiful damsels. In addition to the ever-present local party leader a representative of the Feminine Action section of the party always welcomed him. The party leader gave his welcome in behalf of the people; the feminine representative, frequently a school teacher, greeted him in the name of the women of the locality. López Mateos then spoke to a great rally, concentrating on economic problems, of which he showed an amazing grasp, and usually managed to include a reference to the women voters assembled in his honor.

Typical remarks selected from a large number of speeches serve to illustrate his technique of appealing to the feminine voters. For

example, at San Luis Potosí, on February 26, 1958, as his campaign gathered momentum, he expressed gratitude that women could vote with confidence in their decision at the polls.

> Now we initiate a new epoch in our national history, thanks to an act of historic justice which has given to women that which was their due: perfect equality of political rights and obligations with men. The women will bring to the civic and political life of the country those virtues which up to now have been their jealously guarded treasures; they will bring to the Republic that which they have always had in the highest degree: the love of country, and the honor in which they have guarded their homes, which they will now bring to the civic activities of Mexico.
>
> I trust, wives of Potosí, women of Potosí, that the enrolling of women in the political life of Mexico may set the most important milestone in our national history, that which marks for all Mexicans the unwavering road to honor, that which marks for all Mexicans the supreme duty to honor and serve Mexico.[27]

On May 30, as his campaign drew to a close, López Mateos addressed a great rally in the ninth electoral district of the Federal District after some of the PRI's ablest feminine orators had already addressed the crowd. When the candidate rose to speak he insisted that he considered the problems of Mexico as merely the collective problems of the homes of Mexico.

> For this reason I affirm here that the intervention of the women in the civic and political life of Mexico is the step necessary for the more careful study of national problems and that a better means of solving them will be due to the participation of the Mexican women.
>
> Therefore I have frequently asserted that the participation of the women in the civic and political life of Mexico marks the most solid advance, perhaps, since our independence from Spain because the women who have participated in all our struggles at the side of the men have never manifested for themselves their own opinion and now they are doing so in a brilliant manner as Señora de Amelio and Señora de Ortiz have done this evening.[28]

The PRI's handsome young candidate made similar appeals to the feminine voters in many parts of the country but none more

worthy of note. When finally López Mateos officially ended his series of campaign tours with a great rally in Toluca, on June 16, a combination of circumstances made the activities of the women of more political significance than those of the candidate.

The women themselves participated more actively in this campaign than ever before in Mexican politics. Selected incidents and remarks give some idea of the extent to which they added color and emphasis in keeping with their new political rights. On January 26, 1958, at the Florida Theater in Mexico City, the Federation of Feminine Organizations of the CTM held an assembly of more than 10,000 women to honor the candidacy of López Mateos. All the party leaders and their wives attended including the candidate and his wife, doña Eva. Señorita Carmen María Ariaza, secretary of the federation, presided and gave the welcoming address, after a great ovation for the honored guests.

> The organized women, cast in positions of leadership by history, guided by the patriotism of exemplary women and united with the men of the Revolution are prepared to forge the destinies of Mexico and are ready for the exercise of the right of citizenship which they will use in contributing to raising you, Licenciado Adolfo López Mateos, to the post of Chief Executive of the nation.[29]

Doña Eva Sámano de López Mateos answered the opening remarks for the candidate as an appropriate gesture for an all-feminine assembly. She insisted that she would not take any direct part in her husband's political campaign or his public life, but that she would aid and support him in everything he did. She emphasized the role of women as mothers and home makers.

> We women of Mexico are gratified at the solidarity of the Mexican family, where the virtues of our fathers have their strongest refuge, where the ideals of the people emerge in the happenings of the day and in which are born the currents which direct national opinion. . . .
>
> The women of our time, in addition to their family duties, have full political rights. It is very important that they should decide to exercise them without abandoning their homes; rather they should make of their homes the criterion to measure political problems and seek their solutions.[30]

Everywhere the candidate traveled women delegates met his train, plane, or caravan and presented speeches in support of his candidacy. In Charcas, San Luis Potosí, in February, Señorita Socorro Juárez welcomed candidate López Mateos and concluded by asserting:

> The President of the Republic, Ruiz Cortines, made no mistake when in an act of justice which has characterized his regime he conceded to us equality of civic rights with men in order to fulfill his promise as a candidate and thus give reality to one of the most noble principles of the Revolution.[31]

In the city of San Luis Potosí, Matilde Cabrera Piña de Corse, a deputy of the state legislature, had the honor of addressing flowery remarks to the candidate in behalf of the local ladies' organizations.[32] At Morelia, in March, Profesora Celia Gallardo González greeted the candidate with these words:

> The women of Michoacán, in whose name I speak, are present with you in this democratic journey to mark with pride one of the most significant conquests in their favor granted by the Mexican Revolution through the actions of our patriotic President don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines: The full exercise of the rights of citizenship.[33]

In Colima, later in the same month, Señorita Marta Dueñas received him in behalf of the women of the state and sent a greeting from the women of Colima to his wife, doña Eva Sámano de López Mateos.[34] In Manzanillo, two days later, Profesora Carmen Davis Ramírez extended greetings in behalf of the women and pledged their support for the candidacy of López Mateos.[35]

At Saltillo, on March 26, Profesora Guadalupe González Ortiz spoke in the name of the women of Coahuila at the great rally in honor of the visiting candidate. She bespoke the harmonious cooperation of the masculine and feminine elements in politics. "In this historical moment the women of Mexico will join their forces harmoniously with those of the men for the prosperity of the great family which is our nation and in doing so we will render fervent praise to the man who introduced us into the life of full citizenship: don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines."[36] At Concepción del Oro, Zacatecas, on March 28, Señorita Estela Salas served as the voice of the women. She quoted a public statement by the candidate's wife, doña Eva:

"The home is the crucible in which is shaped the political activity of the women and in which the manhood of tomorrow is formed." Señorita Salas concluded by asserting that while supporting the candidacy of López Mateos, "the women as mothers, as teachers, as workers, must remain faithful to the tradition of honor and of chastity of the homes of the Mexican people."[37]

At Culiacán, Sinaloa, on April 13, Profesora Angelina Viedas de Gómez made the appropriate remarks in behalf of the women.[38] Later in the same month, in Tiajuana, Baja California Norte, Margarita Ruiz Díaz presented the feminine greetings in these words:

> The women of Tiajuana, as the rest of those of Lower California, see in you, Licenciado Adolfo López Mateos, the standard bearer worthy of maintaining on high the teachings of don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines. . . . We, the women of Tiajuana, confide in you our hopes that the women will have adequate opportunities to prepare ourselves to contribute to the progress of Mexico.[39]

The next day, at Ensenada, Baja California, Celia Pallares spoke for the women.[40] In Parral, Coahuila, on May 27, Profesora María Martínez addressed the candidate as the representative of the women, who, she asserted, would vote unanimously for López Mateos because he supported the principles of the Revolution and would guide the nation in the paths of prosperity and welfare. She concluded: "It is a grave responsibility which rests on the Mexican woman in this historic hour. It is a responsibility which has a direct relation to the past and which undoubtedly affects the future."[41]

The campaign brought the candidate back to the Federal District where on the last day of May he addressed a big rally. His speech was preceded by greetings from Señora Nedy Trueba de Ortiz and followed by tributes from Señora María Ester Amador de Amelio who spoke on behalf of the women. Señora Trueba Ortiz addressed López Mateos directly in the name of all the women who supported his campaign.

> By my voice all and each of those women speak who, comprehending your ideals, desire to reach the goal you have marked for us, saying: "Mexican women, side by side with the men, have made our fatherland, Mexico, and if we have always been the invariable companions of the men in all the struggles

> it was an urgent act of justice to include us in equality of rights with men, an act which the Revolution has realized through our present President don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines."
>
> We must understand that our proper role in politics is to collaborate with the men, but without ceasing to be the axis of our homes, without abandoning our duties as mothers and as wives, for only in a united home is to be found the basis of a better people.[42]

On June 7, at Tantoyuca, Veracruz, as the campaign drew to a close, Profesora Ernestina Guerrero Álvarez welcomed him in behalf of the women. "The women of the Huasteca," she affirmed, "have understood how to value the thoughts of the candidate López Mateos, because the popular conscience is the origin of his thought. Therefore we support with enthusiasm his presidential candidacy."[43]

These remarks serve to typify the manner in which women participated directly in the campaign rallies held by the candidate in all parts of the Republic. But speeches and demonstrations in the presence of the PRI standard bearer did not by any means constitute the whole of the feminine contribution to the 1958 Mexican presidential campaign.

The feminine workers of the PRI found many ways to organize the women voters and arouse their enthusiasm for López Mateos by activities which he could not attend in person or in which he took no active part. For example, in February and March, 1958, the Feminine Action section of the PRI for the state of Yucatán organized centers for the civic orientation of women which gave special courses to instruct women how to use their newly won suffrage rights.[44] Also in February, General Agustín Olachea, president of the Central Committee of the PRI, commissioned Marta Andrade del Rosal, a faithful party worker and "sacrificed" candidate in the 1955 elections, to hold a series of meetings for women voters in the state of Puebla. She returned to Mexico City on the 28th and reported her tour a great success.[45] In Colima, in March, a group of citizens organized the Ideological Movement of the Revolution to support the candidacy of López Mateos, which at once established a Feminine Action section under the presidency of Señora Berta González, widow of Lanz, with Señora Carreón de González as secretary.[46] The PRI organized State Committees of Revolutionary Action in the states, each of which had its own

feminine section. In March the women of the Federal District supporting the candidacy of López Mateos set up the Civic Feminine Coalition, directly under the PRI Regional Committee of the District, to coordinate the activities of feminine voters not already attached to other groups affiliated with the party.[47]

The Civic Day of Mexican Women, April 6, gave rise to numerous celebrations in honor of women's rights. The National Executive Committee of Political Ideology for Women held one of the most notable of these in the auditorium of the National Lottery Building in Mexico City. Here Profesora Julieta Domínguez presided over a dazzling assembly which included many of the most prominent feminine workers of the PRI: Señora Aurora Ezquerro, director of the Feminine Action section of the PRI for the Federal District; Señora Mercedes Fernández, secretary; Attorney at Law and Deputy Margarita García Flores; Deputy Guadalupe Urzua; Profesora Aurora Zapata; Doctor Margarita Delgado de Solís Quiroga; Attorney at Law María Lavalle Urbina; Profesora Concepción Cobo; Margarita K. de Malo; Fanny Schiller; Ester Villaliz; and Marta Andrade del Rosal. Guest of honor Deputy Rodolfo González Guevara, president of the PRI Regional Committee for the Federal District, which sponsored the meeting, and guest speaker Deputy Luis M. Farías represented the Central Executive Committee of the PRI. Speaker Farías praised the ladies for their vigorous political activity and concluded on a note of confidence:

> President Ruiz Cortines has faith that the Mexican women will always be at the side of progress and of the Revolution, because they have always respected that which is due respect and have always loved that which served the nation well. Therefore his government has never withheld any effort necessary to bring more light, more understanding and more greatness to its people. This is because he knows that the people understand and respond with their approval. In proposing the vote for women he created another great force in the march upward which, in the life of Mexico, the Revolution has signified.[48]

Before adjourning, the "Idealistic Political Women" unanimously agreed to send President Ruiz Cortines the following telegram: "The feminine citizens of the Federal District assembled in the auditorium of the National Lottery render homage to you because

of the reform of constitutional Article 34 which conceded full political rights to Mexican women. We make this promise, to follow your example: to work for the good of Mexico."[49]

At Toluca, home city of López Mateos, on June 16 he officially ended his series of campaign tours with a great rally. It was here that he had gone to school, had subsequently risen from teacher to director of the Technical College and had met doña Eva Sámano, later his wife, also a teacher for some years in the Girls' Normal School at Toluca. The section of don Adolfo's speech addressed to the women voters was not unusual. Doña Eva, however, held a minor rally of her own in the form of a reception at the Girls' School, which was attended by the teachers, most of them former colleagues, and by the students and their mothers. In her speech to the school assembly doña Eva said that in case her husband should be elected President her primary concern would be to aid the women and children of Mexico.[50]

Doña Evita, teen-age daughter of the candidate, contributed her part of the family appeal to the feminine vote. On June 28, in Mexico City, she rode in the parade of "The Charro" and took part that evening in the festival of the National Association of Charros in the Plaza de Toros, where her parents occupied the seat of honor. Pictures of Evita, mounted on horseback, wearing a charro costume, filled the society section of the Sunday papers the next morning indicating a possible intent on the part of hard-headed PRI politicians to use this incident as a means of appealing to the orthodox, conservative, high-society vote of the Charro Association group, which was regarded as more affiliated with the PAN than with the PRI.[51]

A flurry of feminine activity punctuated the first few days of July, 1958, on the very eve of the election. On July 2, the National Confederation of Mexican Women held a great meeting in honor of López Mateos. The Women's Confederation, organized by Carlos Lomelín Castro, vice-president of the National Association of Revolutionary Youth, also affiliated itself with the PRI for the purpose of coordinating the work of feminine organizations in the Federal District and neighboring areas. The Atlas Theater, on Servando Mier Avenue in the capital city, could not hold the crowd of thousands of ladies assembled for the rally. Señorita Julieta Domíngues, president of Political Ideals for Women, one of the

Two champions of woman suffrage congratulate each other — President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines and Señora Amalia de Castillo Ledón

Señora Licenciada Aurora Jiménez de Palacios, first woman member of the Mexican Congress

Mexican women voting for the first time in a presidential election, July 6, 1958

Mexican women standing in line to exercise their newly won suffrage rights, July 6, 1958

confederated associations, published a declaration of principles in conjunction with the session.

The gist of the declaration was that participation of women in the election would guarantee a peaceful, orderly, and honest election and "create an air of security and confidence in the results obtained by the electoral contest."[52] On Saturday evening before the election, enthusiastic feminine rallies blossomed in the third and tenth electoral districts of the Federal District, the latter attended by the candidate's wife, doña Eva.[53]

On the morning of the election itself, Sunday, July 6, President Ruiz Cortines and his wife, doña María, permitted themselves to be photographed early in the morning casting the first ballot in their electoral district. The First Lady, Señora doña María Izaguirre de Ruiz Cortines, then issued a message to the women of Mexico in honor of the first occasion of their use of suffrage rights in a presidential election:

> As a Mexican it is a source of great pride to me that the women, my compatriots, enjoy all the political rights for the exercise of their citizenship. I am an enthusiastic supporter of the vote for women and this morning I observed how the women flocked to the electoral urns to fulfill their duties as citizens.
>
> On this historic day in which for the first time the Mexican women vote to elect a President of the Republic, I am gratified to salute each and every one of the women of Mexico and I desire for them success and good fortune both personally and for their families.[54]

The men of the PRI, for their part, also found occasion to refer to woman suffrage during the campaign, sometimes at rallies attended by the candidate in person, sometimes in meetings which López Mateos could not attend. Two speeches, selected more or less casually, serve to typify the gallant defense of the women by the masculine speakers of the PRI. At Tuxpán, Veracruz, on Sunday, June 15, Germán Granda, speaking for the agrarian, labor, and popular sections of the PRI, addressed the great assembly gathered to hear a campaign speech by López Mateos. "Of great civic pride, of great patriotic spirit is this city where the political life of don Adolfo Ruiz Cortines began, who with great gallantry authorized the vote to the Mexican women, to open wide to them the portals of the rights of citizenship so that they might participate actively

in the destinies of the fatherland."[55] On Thursday, June 26, the National Revolutionary Coalition held its third annual national convention at Chapultepec Restaurant on historic Paseo de la Reforma in Mexico City. Attorney Moreno Sánchez, former Minister of Labor, spoke in behalf of the PRI. "What," he asked, "has PAN planned, for example, concerning women? Only one thing: to frighten them, announcing cataclysms and violations, in order to separate them from the use of the ballot and to prevent the fulfillment, through their own free, honorable, and respectable will, of their historic mandate to assist the men who shape the destinies of their country."[56]

The other political parties also carried on campaigns but they could not match the PRI in the practice of feminine politics nor could the other candidates compete with López Mateos in appeal to the women voters. Six political parties in all registered with the Minister of Gobernación and prepared to nominate candidates for the election: the PRI, the PAN, the Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution (PARM), the PNM, the PP, and the Communist party (PC).[57] The PC and the PP each suffered a bad crisis early in the electoral contest which considerably impaired their effectiveness in the campaign. The PP, at its national convention, could not agree on a candidate. Vicente Lombardo Toledano, heretofore the unquestioned leader of the PP, wished to support López Mateos, but Enrique Ramírez y Ramírez, followed by a strong faction, accused him of appeasement toward Ruiz Cortines and the PRI. The delegation from Veracruz, led by Vidal Díaz Muñoz, withdrew and established the Veracruzan Socialist party which did not even register for national elections. As a result the PP convention adjourned without nominating a presidential candidate and contented itself with designating candidates for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, while Lombardo Toledano later announced his support for the candidacy of López Mateos.[58] Under these circumstances the PP took no active part in the presidential election and bid for the feminine vote by nominating a large number of women as candidates for the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. The PC, unable to find a presidential candidate within the party, nominated Miguel Mendoza López, a humanitarian judge, noted as a champion of civil rights, but avowedly a Catholic and not a member of the party. Mendoza López, apparently not very enthusiastic

about the doubtful honor the PC had bestowed upon him, did not register as a candidate so that the party offered no candidates in the national elections.[59]

The PARM and the PNM each found its support restricted to certain regions of the country and therefore decided to nominate candidates for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies only in certain constituencies and to support López Mateos for President. In the presidential campaign they functioned very much as right-wing groups within the PRI and frequently complained that the PRI did not accord them the respect due their status of independent political parties. As befitting conservative nationalistic parties, they looked with no particular favor on woman suffrage and took no active part in feminine politics.[60] López Mateos made his appeal to the women voters with little or no help from these parties. This left the PAN as the only organized opposition to the PRI in the presidential election.

The PAN held its national convention in Mexico City in November shortly after the PRI convention completed its work. The PAN convention nominated Luis Hector Álvarez, a Chihuahua businessman educated in the United States, as its presidential candidate.[61] Álvarez doubtless hoped for the support of the business and conservative interests, for help from the Church and the Catholic Action, and for the vote of the remnants of the *Cristero* and *Sinarquista* movements which still retained some influence in certain parts of the country. The young and attractive PAN candidate, accompanied on most of his campaign trips by his good-looking and intelligent young wife, could also hope to win a large part of the feminine vote. Álvarez, however, made no particularly strong direct appeal to the women voters in his speeches. His reference to the influence of women in politics in his speech accepting the party nomination in Mexico City November 30, 1957, typified his attitude: "I have absolute certainty that the participation of the Mexican woman in this campaign will put us on the road to victory."[62] Aside from the fact that the PAN nominated a large number of women candidates in the congressional elections it had no particular feminine program to appeal to the women voters.

The PAN undertook to imitate the organization and tactics of the PRI. It established a Feminine Action section directed by Profesora Carmen de la Fuente, with regional committees which

conducted their most active campaign in regions thought to have strong conservative elements, such as Chihuahua, home of the PAN presidential candidate, Durango, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacán, Puebla, and Tlaxcala. The PAN presidential candidate, Luis H. Álvarez, carried his campaign to nearly all parts of the Republic, while his pretty young wife attracted the women voters represented by feminine contingents furnished by the local committees for his election rallies. Candidate Álvarez opposed the revolutionary and radical policies of the PRI, appealed to the conservative interests in general, and bid frankly for the Roman Catholic vote. For example, he asserted openly in Jalisco and Guanajuato, centers of *Cristero* activity in the 1920's, that the PAN followed the encyclicals of popes Leo XIII and Pius XI.[63] He concentrated on criticism of the PRI for the economic ills of the country, for political centralism, and for lack of effective suffrage. He and other PAN leaders became increasingly bitter about PRI control of elections, and on May 28 Señor Alfonso Ituarte Servín, the PAN representative on the Federal Electoral Commission, announced that he and his party would withdraw from this body because it was failing to fulfill its function of guaranteeing honest elections.[64] After the death of José de Jesus Marquez Monreal, a PAN party worker killed in an election dispute in Chihuahua on June 15, Señor Ituarte Servín formally withdrew and ceased to participate in the proceedings of the commission.[65]

The congressional elections for all seats in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies coincided with the presidential election so that the parties combined to some extent their presidential and congressional campaigns for the feminine vote. The political parties, in order to fulfill the requirements of the electoral law, had to register their candidates for senators and deputies with the Federal Electoral Commission by the last week in April so that the list of nominees could be officially published. This meant that any campaigns to influence the selection of candidates or conventions for their nomination had to be held early in the year. As early as March 15, 1958, notices circulated in the press that the PRI had made an allocation of seats in the Chamber of Deputies to the party's various sectors: 80 to the Popular section, which included the Feminine Action section, and about 40 each to the Labor and Peasant sections.[66] Shortly thereafter General Agustín

Olachea Áviles, president of the Executive Committee, held a press interview in which he responded to a question as to whether the PRI intended to nominate a woman candidate to the Senate. The reporters quoted him as saying: "Among the feminine members of the PRI are many able persons and it is the intention of the party to stimulate and encourage the civic activity of women, so they can participate as fully as possible in electoral questions."[67] These remarks launched a rumor that the PRI did in fact intend to nominate some feminine candidates for the Senate.

On March 22, notices circulated in the press that General Olachea and Adolfo López Mateos had met to agree on a slate of PRI candidates for senators and deputies and that Margarita García Flores, deputy from the fourth district of Nuevo León and director of the party's Feminine Action section, would be rewarded with nomination as one of the party's two senatorial candidates from Nuevo León.[68] The PRI's central executive committee then called for the meeting of the regional and district conventions by April 6 to nominate the party candidates for the 162 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 60 in the Senate. Rumors flew thick and fast concerning the contents of the list of candidates agreed to in March by General Olachea and López Mateos, while some protested that the holding of the district and regional conventions consummated a crude farce in which the conventions merely opened "sealed envelopes" from national party headquarters which contained the names of the candidates that assemblies must "nominate."[69]

The feminine politicians contributed their part to the PRI dissension, particularly in the Federal District — always the center of most intense political activity. The Feminine Action section of the Popular Anti-Communist Front, one of the organizations attached to the Popular section of the PRI, early in April protested the nomination of Señorita María Lavalle Urbina as one of the candidates for deputy from the Federal District. The anti-Communist ladies so vigorously accused Señorita Lavalle Urbina of being openly Communistic that the official list, published later in the month, omitted her name.[70] Also the League of Mexican Woman Electors, composed of the most distinguished members of the Feminine section of the PRI, violently protested against the candidacy of Marta Andrade del Rosal as the party nominee for

deputy from the sixth electoral district of the Federal District. The feminine politicians claimed that she stirred up dissension and that her trip through Puebla in February for the central party organization had not been a success. This raised such conflict among the ladies of the party that PRI leaders experienced some difficulty in determining who were its outstanding women members.[71] Marta, however, apparently prevailed in the contest because a large and active delegation from the Feminine Action section of the party attended the nominating convention of the sixth district which dutifully announced her nomination, and on April 13 she spoke for all 19 PRI candidates for deputies from the Federal District when they accepted their nominations at a ceremony in the Arena México.[72]

Between the nomination of PRI candidates for Congress by the conventions early in April and the publication of the official list toward the end of the month, considerable protest arose over certain nominations. General Agustín Olachea and the central committee set about solving these with great patience and considerable salve, often in the form of other jobs. Some changes took place in the list of nominees between these two dates, but none of these changes seemed to have involved women candidates.[73] When the *Diario oficial* published the final nomination list on April 29, 1958, the PRI had nominated 24 women candidates in all, three for alternate senator among 60 candidates for alternate, nine for deputy among 162, and 12 for alternate deputy among an equal number. The PRI feminine delegation included such party faithfuls as the following: María del Carmen Ariaza López, secretary of the Federation of Organizations of Working Women, nominated as alternate senator from Aguascalientes; Marcelina Galindo Arce, deputy from the fourth district of Chiapas, nominated as alternate senator from Chiapas; Profesora Marta Andrade del Rosal, whose political career has already been mentioned, nominated deputy from the sixth district of the Federal District; Profesora María Guadalupe Martínez de Hernández Loza, secretary for political subjects of the Federation of Feminine Organizations of the Republic, nominated deputy from the second district of Jalisco; Ana María Zapata de Manrique, daughter of the revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, nominated deputy from the second district of Morelos; Margarita García Flores, deputy from the fourth district

of Nuevo León and national director of PRI's Feminine Action section, nominated alternate senator from Nuevo León; and Esperanza Téllez Oropeza, a member of President Ruiz Cortines' personal staff, who resigned to accept nomination as deputy from the tenth district of Puebla.[74]

The PAN made its most serious bid for the women's vote by nominating more feminine candidates for Congress than any other political party, 29 in all: four deputies, 17 alternate deputies, three senators, and five senate alternates. The three candidates for senator, one each from Durango, Guerrero, and Yucatán, represented areas in which the PAN hoped for a large vote. Some shrewd observers expressed the belief that the nomination of eight feminine senatorial candidates by the PAN implied an admission of defeat by presidential candidate Luis H. Álvarez because woman senators would be the last thing desired by a PAN President. The PAN conceded the primacy of the PRI feminine politics in the Federal District by not nominating any women candidates from the Federal District despite the fact that it had the largest representation in the national Congress of any federal entity at this time — 19 deputies and two senators — and traditionally holds the center of the stage in national political activity. The PP and the PRI both carried on their most intense feminine political activity in the Federal District, and the PNM offered its only feminine candidate there.[75]

The PP, representative of the radical and left-wing elements in national politics, competed vigorously with the PRI for the feminine vote in the congressional elections, especially in the Federal District. The PP and all the organizations that cooperated with it emphasized their rejection of the notion of inferiority of women and insisted on the removal of all legal or political distinctions between the sexes. For example, the Feminine Association for the Defense of the Fatherland held a demonstration on March 8 in the Plaza de Santo Domingo before the statue of heroine of the 1810 revolution Josefa Ortiz de Domínguez at which the officers of the association spoke. Attorney Gonzala Jaramillo, Doctor Ester Chapa, and Señora Fidela Brindiz, the officers who also served as the Coordinating Committee of the Association, demanded removal from state and national laws of all discriminations against women. Other important association members who participated included

Señora Teresa A., widow of Flores Magón; Elvira Trueba; social worker Dalia Salgado Palacios; and Señorita Monica Flores.[76] None of the speakers referred to woman suffrage or the coming elections.

When General Olachea hinted to the press that the PRI might nominate some women to the Senate, the PP immediately countered the next day, March 18, by distributing circulars announcing the nomination of the only feminine pair for the Senate, Profesora Hortensia Rojas Velásquez, labor leader of the workers in the Government Pensions Office, as candidate for proprietary senator, and Señorita María Teresa Jiménez Bermejo as alternate from the Federal District.[77] In accord with its claim that it made no political distinction between men and women, the PP conducted some of its most intense feminine activity in electoral districts where it had no women candidates, as for example the rally in the 18th electoral district of the Federal District on May 25, in which three women orators spoke: Senate candidate Hortensia Rojas; Lina Váldez de Rubio, nominee for deputy from the eighth district; and party worker Estela Rivera. Señorita Rivera attacked the PAN vigorously for assigning a servile status to women and contrasted this with the attitude of the PP which she insisted considered them equal participants with men in all the essential activities of life, social and political.[78] In return for all this activity the PP succeeded in electing the only woman subsequently admitted to the Chamber of Deputies who was not a PRI member.

Reduced to chart form, the nomination of feminine candidates by the various political parties and their subsequent election or defeat appear as follows:[79]

Feminine Candidates

	Deputy		Alternate		Total	
Party	Nominated	Elected	Nominated	Elected	Nominated	Elected
PRI	9	7	12	12	21	19
PAN	4	0	17	0	21	0
PNM	1	0	1	0	2	0
PARM	0	0	0	0	0	0
PP	5	1	5	1	10	2
Total	19	8	35	13	54	21

Feminine Candidates

Party	Senator		Alternate		Total	
	Nominated	Elected	Nominated	Elected	Nominated	Elected
PRI	0	0	3	3	3	3
PAN	3	0	5	0	8	0
PNM	0	0	0	0	0	0
PARM	0	0	0	0	0	0
PP	3	0	1	0	4	0
Total	6	0	9	3	15	3

When matched against the total number of candidates nominated by the five political parties the number of feminine candidates was not great. All five parties together nominated 153 senate candidates and an equal number of alternates, but only 6 of these were women nominees for proprietary senator and 9 for alternates for a total of 15 out of 306 candidates. The political parties altogether nominated 54 women candidates for the Chamber of Deputies, 19 proprietary and 35 alternates, out of a total of 934 candidates for the 162 seats — 467 candidates for deputy and an equal number of alternates. All this adds up to only 69 women candidates out of a total of 1.240 candidates nominated by all the parties in the congressional elections, certainly a most modest feminine offering for the nearly 5 million registered women voters.

The dangerous influence of the Roman Catholic Church over the feminine vote expected by some observers did not materialize. Very early in the campaign López Mateos let it be known through his brother and other sources that he and his wife doña Eva and their daughter Evita were all loyal members of the Roman Catholic Church. In return the Archbishop of Mexico, Monsignor Miguel Darío Miranda, permitted newsmen to say without contradiction that the Church had no objection to López Mateos as the PRI presidential nominee.[80] In April, 1958, when López Mateos visited the port city of Mazatlán, a full-page picture of Bishop Lino Aguirre García, with a statement on the election, appeared in the local paper on April 13. The Bishop exhorted all loyal Catholics to exercise their right to vote and to do so with prayer and thoughtfulness in order to elect able and honorable people to office. The

statement did not approve or disapprove any candidate or party or even mention party issues or programs.[81] Finally on July 3, Monsignor Miguel Darío Miranda, Archbishop of Mexico, issued a proclamation, carried by all the daily papers on July 5 – the very eve of the election – calling on all Mexicans to exercise their civic duty of election in a spirit of justice and concord.

> In this moment in which the fatherland calls all citizens to fulfill their civic duty by electing new governors, we ask God that he will purify all hearts of all those sentiments foreign to a sincere love of country, leaving in all Mexicans a spirit of justice and concord from which they will surely derive true and continuous ennoblement of Mexico and the true well being of all its children.[82]

The proclamation of the Archbishop, like the exhortation of the Bishop of Sinaloa, neither supported nor denounced any candidate, party, or program nor did either imply or even hint any official position of the Church in the election. The Church appeared to have learned, at least for this election, the importance of not intervening openly in Mexican politics. The specter of clerical support electing conservative, proclerical candidates and defeating necessary reforms by controlling the women's vote vanished temporarily.

Editorial comment on feminine participation for the first time in a presidential election to some extent mirrored the changing concept of the role of women in politics. As early as August, 1957, Eduardo J. Correa of *Excelsior* expressed the opinion that "the voting of women for the first time in a presidential election will constitute a real menace to the PRI." In October, 1957, *Excelsior* complained that with the electorate almost doubled by the addition of women a few weeks was too short a time for the political parties to select delegates and hold conventions to nominate candidates who would really represent the will of the people. In March, 1958, Rodríguez García Treviño, editor of *Excelsior,* asserted that the PRI still controlled elections and that it had done little, despite granting women the right to vote, to promote the growth of democratic political maturity in Mexican politics.[83] Late in May, Eduardo Vásquez Rosilo asserted, in *El Universal,* that the arguments that woman's place is the home and that politics is a dirty business in which she should not participate no longer apply to the situation

in which women find themselves. He contended that public and economic pressure on the family and on children is now so great that women must be educated and must take part in politics to defend their homes and protect youth against bad influences. On June 13 Victorio Ocampo, also in *El Universal,* insisted that Mexican women could exercise their political rights fully and still retain their outstanding feminine characteristics of Christianity, sweetness, patience, and courage.[84]

Jorge Piño Sandoval, who accompanied López Mateos on all his campaign trips and published a regular column in *El Universal* entitled "En Route to July 6th," professed on June 18 to see a connection between the prominent role of women in the election and the unusual calmness and peacefulness of the campaign.[85] Manuel Pacheco Moreno, in an editorial entitled "The Political Campaign" published in this same daily on June 27, noted the peacefulness of the campaign and the participation of women as two of its outstanding characteristics. He concluded, "One of the most important achievements of our nation is the vote of women, a legitimate right which was achieved by a constitutional amendment which will always be an honor to those who initiated it and to President Ruiz Cortines who made the feminine vote effective."[86] Two days after the election an unsigned editorial appeared in *El Universal* congratulating the Mexican people for showing great self-restraint and political maturity in the election.

> Many factors contributed to the favorable atmosphere in which the election was conducted and we should not ignore or forget them. Among these the presence of women in the electoral function merits special mention.
>
> Women were in great part the moderating element which established clearly and definitely the appearance of civic maturity to which we can now point with pride.
>
> It would not be just to recognize the influence of women in the electoral function without mentioning the one who made it possible: President Ruiz Cortines.[87]

Early in August, Enriqueta del Carmen, author of the regular column "From One Woman to Another" in *Novedades,* commented on the election. The election demonstrated, she admitted, that men outnumber women in politics and that masculine considerations still prevail, but she insisted that women are still supreme in the

home. They have much more knowledge and control over what goes on in the home than the men, and therefore women must be supreme in all political considerations which affect the home directly.[88]

Chapter 8

THE LADY AND THE BALLOT

ELECTION CAMPAIGNS always reveal much of the general character, composition, and sources of power in any society. The Mexican presidential campaign of 1958 highlighted characteristics of great significance in Mexican society, particularly the growing political importance of women. But, after all, the proof of the ballot is in the counting. This is particularly true in Mexico where the Constitution specified the obligation to vote among the duties of citizenship and where the federal electoral law requires no literacy qualifications but provides penalties for qualified voters who fail to register and to vote. These penalties include fines of not less than 10 pesos nor more than 300 pesos and imprisonment of not less than three days nor more than six months.[1] Although generally not enforced, these punishments provide an incentive for all qualified voters, possibly with the help of party leaders and election officials, to be sure that somebody registers and actually casts a ballot in their name. These arrangements have redounded particularly to the advantage of the PRI because as the largest party it has been able to exert the greatest pressure and offer the most rewards to push registration as high as possible. It has always furnished poll watchers for all polling places and has been able to count upon PRI party affiliation of at least some of the election officials. In fact some of the reports covering the 1958 election mentioned that the PRI, in its campaign to encourage the largest possible registration, provided for discounts in government stores and elsewhere to customers showing their registration certificates.[2]

Because of the great increase in population and the pressure exerted by political parties and by other means, registration for voting reached the highest point in the history of the country.

When registration closed on May 30, 1957, the Federal Electoral Commission announced that 10,422,142 eligible voters had registered in the whole Republic, 4,586,343 women and 5,835,799 men. The Federal District, as the most populous area, led in registrations with 846,235 men and 734,368 women for a total of 1,580,603 voters.[3] In fact, only in Veracruz, with 750,272 registrants, did the total number of registered voters, men and women, exceed the number of women voters registered in the Federal District.[4] This enormous registration possibly increased the opportunity and the temptation to engage in various kinds of election frauds, and some thought that the large number of feminine voters, unaccustomed to election procedures, might be more subject to fraudulent practices than the men. The election, in fact, was one of the most peaceful in Mexican history and large numbers of voters, including women, participated. The Electoral Commission later accepted some 7.5 million votes as valid, approximately 3 million of these being feminine votes.[5] Charges of malpractices in the presidential election had little significance because López Mateos was so clearly the most popular candidate that no serious doubt of his overwhelming victory could exist. Charges of fraud in some of the congressional elections, however, received more serious consideration.

The Mexican Constitution provides for the direct popular election of the President and, of course, the members of Congress also, but charges Congress with the obligation of officially declaring the results when it meets in September following the election. Mexico has no office of Vice-president, which seems to the Mexicans, on the basis of their history, in keeping with the direct popular election of the Chief Executive. Most commentators immediately after the election credited López Mateos with winning some 75 per cent to 80 per cent of the popular vote and probably an equal percentage of the feminine vote, but it remained for Congress to make the official declaration and decide those congressional elections in which the candidates still contested the results.[6] Everybody accepted the clear triumph of the PRI by a large majority in both the presidential and congressional elections and its victory among the feminine voters in one of the most peaceful and honest elections in the nation's history. José Vasconcelos, veteran politician and man of letters, with whom López Mateos had associated himself for a time in his early career, observed that the election resembled a

fiesta more than a battle.[7] Many families went together to the polls; and in some places members of religious orders voted, without molestation – though of course they were not eligible to run for office. Newsmen who interviewed women at the polling places and in the streets during the election reported the general sentiment among women voters that they wished to participate in politics in order to improve the conduct of elections and help to purify the political atmosphere of the nation. "It could be observed that innumerable women of all social classes and of all ages flocked to the polling places. Feminine enthusiasm was notable and in various places the lines formed by the women were much longer than those formed by the men."[8]

A number of actions preliminary to the declaration of results by Congress took place according to custom immediately following the election. The Federal Electoral Commission made a cursory survey of the election returns sent in from all parts of the Republic and in most cases accepted the results certified by the local election officials. Where some doubt existed or some irregularity clearly manifested itself the Commission set aside these returns to forward to Congress for its subsequent consideration. PRI candidates who entertained some misgivings about their election flocked to national party headquarters to see if they could influence the party leaders, possibly General Olachea in conference with López Mateos, to accept their credentials, which they felt sure would then be approved by Congress. The candidates whose elections had been approved by the Commission came to Mexico City early in August to be seen and to apply to the Installation Committee of the XLIII Congress for pass cards to admit them to the premises of the Chamber of Deputies, the same formality taking place in the Senate also. According to current Mexican practice enough candidates must be admitted to the two chambers by August 15 of election years to constitute a quorum in each, this quorum forming itself into the "Preparatory Junta" of the Senate or of the Chamber of Deputies. The Preparatory Junta then proceeds to organize its own house to begin business on September 1. As one of the important items of business each Junta selects from its own number an electoral committee which has the job of canvassing the election returns from the Federal Electoral Commission, issuing certificates of election, and deciding contested elections.

These arrangements for examining and declaring the results of the election gave the PRI as the dominant party a number of points at which to check the candidates carefully. The Federal Electoral Commission scanned the elections and candidates as election returns came in. Party headquarters took a look at the candidates when they came to Mexico City for the opening of Congress. The Installation Committees of the previous Congress made a perfunctory examination of candidates before issuing pass cards of access to the premises of the particular chamber. The Electoral Committee of each house went over the election returns and the records of the candidates with care before recommending them for formal approval by Congress. Congress ordinarily has considered itself bound by the reports of the Electoral Committees, but could alter the decisions of the Committees if either of the houses thought this necessary. The candidates in contested elections have always enjoyed the right to appeal directly to the Preparatory Junta of their particular house from the decision of the Electoral Committee. If the Junta wished to hear their appeal the contestants then exercised the right to "defend their credentials" before a full meeting of the Preparatory Junta which then accepted or altered the recommendation of the Electoral Committee. During the preliminary sessions of the XLIV Congress in the latter part of August, 1958, a cartoonist, inspired by all this double-checking of candidates, published a newspaper cartoon depicting General Olachea and López Mateos as shepherds leading sheep marked PRI from one corral to another.

This somewhat complicated procedure for approving the election of members of Congress gives the Mexicans an opportunity to exercise their delightful genius for inventing a political vocabulary. Candidates for Congress are "postulates" or mere nominees until their election has been approved by the Federal Electoral Commission. Those postulates disapproved by the Commission are the "guillotined ones." A postulate approved by the Federal Electoral Commission becomes a "deputy or senator presumptive" and when the presumptives have been issued pass cards by the Installation Committee of the previous Congress they become the "tied or lassoed ones." Those who thought they had been elected but did not receive the approval of the Electoral Committee of their particular house become the "sacrificed ones." When the Committee's decision to sacrifice a candidate has received the confirmation of

the appropriate house he is said to have been "burned up." Those about whose election some doubt existed, but who made a good case for themselves and subsequently received approval, are then referred to as the "cooked-up ones," and those seeking contested seats about whose case no decision has been made when Congress opens are the "congealed or frozen ones."[9]

The Federal Electoral Commission recommended confirmation of the election of all 60 PRI senatorial candidates and failed to approve only in the case of a few Senate alternates. It recommended favorably 140 PRI deputy candidates, 5 PAN candidates, and 1 each for the PP and PNM, for a total of 147 with their corresponding alternates. It "guillotined" outright 7 PRI candidates and failed to approve in the case of 15 more which it passed on to the Chamber undecided.[10] The Senate Electoral Committee reported favorably on the recommendations of the Electoral Commission which the Senate then confirmed, including 3 women alternates: María del Carmen Ariaza López, Aguascalientes; Marcelina Galindo Arce, Chaipas; Margarita García Flores, Nuevo León.[11] In the Chamber of Deputies the contested elections received more attention. The Chamber solved 6 of the 15 undecided elections, 2 of these involving feminine candidates, for a total of 153 out of 162, which left 9 "frozen ones."[12] The Electoral Committee of the Chamber consisted of 15 members chosen on August 15 to consider and report to the Preparatory Junta on the recommendations of the Electoral Commission. It promptly divided itself into five sections composed of three men each since no women served on this committee.[13] The Electoral Committee in the two contests involving women recommended in favor of the PRI candidate in the sixth district of the Federal District and in favor of the PP candidate from the Iguala district in Guerrero.

The 5 PAN candidates obeyed the order of the party's National Executive Committee not to accept the seats awarded them in the Chamber of Deputies because, after the shooting of a party worker on June 15, PAN claimed the election was fraudulent.[14] The PP issued the same ruling, protesting that its candidates in the Federal District were counted out by PRI election officials. But one of its candidates, a woman from Guerrero involved in a contested election, seemed determined to disregard the party ruling. The two women candidates in the contested election from the Iguala district

of Guerrero, Profesora María López Díaz for the PRI and labor leader Macrina Rabadán Santana de Arenal for the PP, both came to Mexico City, each determined to vindicate her election. On August 4 Profesora María López Díaz arrived at PRI national headquarters in Mexico City hoping to confer with high party officials and to have her election confirmed. Only minor party officials received her, however, and she became convinced that the party leaders were determined to sacrifice her to the opposition. On the following day she held an interview with the press in which she asserted that she had received more than 50,000 votes while her opponent received only 2,300, but that her reception at national PRI headquarters convinced her that the decision had been made to award her seat to the opposition candidate for purposes of national party policy.[15] She appeared discouraged because of the refusal of the Federal Electoral Commission to confirm her election and because of the cold reception she received at PRI headquarters and seemed disposed to drop her fight for recognition.

Macrina Rabadán, encouraged by these events, determined to make a fight for the contested seat in the Chamber of Deputies. Macrina's fiery refusal to obey party orders and her asserted intention to serve, if confirmed by the Chamber, caught popular favor. She organized in Guerrero, with the aid of friends and strong support from some of the labor unions in Acapulco, a People's Civic Front which sent delegates to appear before the Electoral Committee of the Chamber and showered the Committee and the Chamber with letters and telegrams. She asserted that members of all political parties composed the Civic Front and demanded the right to appear before the Electoral Committee and the Preparatory Junta to vindicate her credential. Important newspapers in the state of Guerrero took up the fight in favor of Macrina.[16] On August 26, 1958, the Electoral Committee reported to the Chamber of Deputies in favor of recognition of Macrina Rabadán. The report of the Committee accepted the decision of the Federal Electoral Commission that irregularities had occurred in the election. The Committee report emphasized the fact already noted by the Electoral Commission that although María López Díaz received 54,852 votes as opposed to 2,542 for Macrina Rabadán, the second electoral district of Guerrero with headquarters in Iguala had in fact only 42,000 registered voters, and most damaging of all, that this district

returned only 500 authenticated votes for López Mateos who as PRI presidential candidate led the national ticket.[17]

Doña Macrina demanded the right to speak to the Preparatory Junta in vindication of her credential when the Electoral Committee made its report, while María López Díaz did not appear in person but confided her defense to the Feminine section of the PRI, which naturally wanted the Chamber to seat as many of its own members as possible. The PRI Feminine section appointed Guadalupe Martínez de Hernández Loza, recently approved deputy from Guadalajara and local leader of the Feminine section of the CTM, to speak in behalf of Señorita López Díaz. Doña Macrina made the most of her opportunity to speak before the full Preparatory Junta in defense of her credential. A mature and experienced woman of good appearance, she spoke with great firmness and ability despite protests from members of the CTM Feminine section who sat in the galleries and interrupted with shouts such as: "This is a farce!" and, "Doña María is being sacrificed!" Deputy Guadalupe Martínez could add little to the report of the Commission and the Committee in her defense of PRI candidate María López Díaz. Macrina, however, contrasted effectively her own experience as a labor leader of some renown and representative of Mexican labor in national and international conferences, with the lack of experience of her youthful opponent, whom she referred to patronizingly as a "professor of basketball" who did not dare to appear in her own defense. Under these conditions the Preparatory Junta approved Macrina by a large majority despite the fact that she admitted she received only 2,542 votes out of a total of 42,000.[18]

The other contested election involving a feminine candidate presented no such dramatic display and required very little time for settlement. Colonel Rubén Gómez Prado of the PARM contested the election of PRI deputy presumptive Marta Andrade del Rosal in the sixth electoral district of the Federal District. Since the elections in the Federal District always receive the greatest attention of the foreign population and the numerous alert newspapers, they are always conducted with the greatest care. Consequently, the documentation in favor of doña Marta's election seemed clear to the Federal Electoral Commission, which so recommended to the Preparatory Junta. The Electoral Committee of the Junta accepted the recommendation of the Commission, but Colonel Gómez Prado

demanded and received the right to defend his credential before the Preparatory Junta. When Colonel Gómez Prado spoke before the Preparatory Junta on August 20, 1958, his remarks seemed rather lengthy and boring and many received the impression that as a high ranking officer of long military experience he manifested a rather haughty air toward the Chamber. Doña Marta, on the other hand, a seasoned campaigner, made a brief and effective speech in her own defense and received the unanimous approval of the Junta.[19]

All the presumptive deputies approved by the Preparatory Junta on recommendation from its Electoral Committee appeared briefly upon confirmation to introduce themselves to the Chamber, which gave two of the women an ovation at the time of their speeches of introduction. Señora Ana María Zapata Portillo de Manrique, daughter of the revolutionary hero Emiliano Zapata, received an ovation when she acknowledged her confirmation on August 20, 1958. She asserted that her triumph in the election represented the triumph in politics of the working women of the peasant class.[20] The approval of Profesora María Luisa Rosado de Hernández as deputy from the first district of Tabasco also produced a sensation. The good-looking young school teacher from Tabasco gave an eloquent speech in a somewhat bashful manner declaring her resolve to work for the good of the nation. An observant newsman in the gallery noted that "her speech was applauded with great enthusiasm and no one would have been surprised to hear *vivas* and see hats land upon the tribune."[21] When the Electoral Committee and the Preparatory Junta concluded the work of checking the election of deputies on August 31, 1958, it had approved 8 women among 153 proprietary deputies and 12 women among the same number of alternates, with 9 contested seats left vacant. At the same time the Senate had approved 3 women alternates among 60 alternates, and 60 men, all PRI members, as proprietary senators.[22] These same persons, meeting a few days later in the first regular session of the two houses of the XLIV Congress, formally confirmed unanimously the recommendations of their Electoral Committees.

President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines in his sixth and final annual message, delivered on September 1, 1958, to a joint session of both chambers of Congress and an assembled crowd of notables, referred with some pride to the large number of women present. He read in

full his long and impressive speech in which he summarized and justified the major accomplishments of his six-year term and pointed to some of the serious problems still faced by the nation. He mentioned woman suffrage as one of the more important achievements of his administration and one with significant long-term consequences. He associated the presence of women in politics with the peacefulness of the recent election which he regarded as one of the calmest and most honest in the nation's history. Doctor Federico Ortiz Armengol, deputy from Oaxaca and president of the Chamber of Deputies, echoed the sentiments of the President in his formal reply to the annual message in the name of Congress. He also professed to see a connection between the free and equal exercise of political rights by women and the orderliness and peacefulness of the recent election.[23] Quite a few women in attendance received seats of honor, prominent among these being the first lady of the land, Señora María Izaguirre de Ruiz Cortines, the wives of the cabinet members seated with their husbands, and in the rear, behind the PRI party officials and their wives, the representatives of the various feminine organizations attached to and affiliated with the PRI. The Chamber of Deputies, for the first time, selected some of its women members to participate in the ceremony of conducting the President to and from the premises.[24]

During the period September 1 to December 1, 1958, Congress organized itself and began regular sessions, while López Mateos became officially President-elect but Ruiz Cortines continued to hold the office of President of the Republic. Women received greater recognition in the organization of Congress than ever before, but the legislative branch showed great reluctance to transact any important business pending the inauguration of the new President. The Chamber of Deputies designated three of its feminine members to membership on its Grand Committee, the first women ever to serve in this capacity, and named one woman among the large number of secretaries of the Chamber, but in the first few months of the session they performed primarily ceremonial and routine functions. The three committeewomen, Señora Ana María Zapata de Manrique, Señorita Aurora Arrayales de Morales, and Señorita María Luisa Rosada, assisted in the ceremonies of the annual presidential message and the inauguration.[25] The Chamber of Deputies did not select women to any key posts on the important

committees: in the Senate the proprietary senators attended to business in person so the women alternates did not have any opportunity to serve. No measures primarily of interest to women came before Congress at this time.

On September 10, 1958, the Chamber of Deputies voted unanimously to validate the election of López Mateos as recommended by the report of its Grand Committee. The vote as approved showed 6,769,754 for López Mateos and 705,303 for Luis H. Álvarez.[26] Various deputies, including some of the feminine members, spoke in support of the motion to approve the report of the Grand Committee. Señorita Aurora Arrayales, recently elected deputy from Mazatlán, declared:

> Through me the women of Mexico ratify and pronounce in favor of this decision which is dictated by popular will. And in pronouncing themselves in favor of this decision, they ratify their traditional revolutionary credo, affirming the knowledge and the understanding which they have of the profound problems of Mexico, affirming also their knowledge of the aspirations which must be realized, aspirations summarized in the noble principles of the Revolution. This is the reason why the women are forging their own citizenship within the ranks of the Institutional Revolutionary Party, grouped into the three great sectors which compose it.[27]

Deputy Macrina Rabadán asserted that the working people of Guerrero supported this decision. Deputy Arturo Llorente González of Veracruz addressed some of his remarks to the influence of women in the election.

> It is evident that the increase in the number of electors reflects clearly the participation of the women, for the first time, in the presidential election; that the election marks the definite incorporation of the women in the electoral tasks of their country to improve them, to revitalize our democracy by the employment of their virtues and spiritual resources.[28]

One woman member, Macrina Rabadán, deputy from Iguala, soon managed to attract considerable attention. Early in September the Central Executive Committee of the PP expelled doña Macrina from the party for accepting a seat in the Chamber of Deputies and imposed the same punishment on party leader Enrique Ramírez y Ramírez for declaring in favor of Macrina. The Central

Executive Committee of PAN threatened to impose the same punishment on its five members who had been awarded seats in the Chamber if they assumed their duties and as the session progressed the five PAN seats remained vacant.[29] Many members of the professions and intellectuals of left-wing or progressive tendencies admired Macrina Rabadán for her determination to serve as a deputy and wished to demonstrate their support publicly. On September 7 they announced that a public banquet would be held in her honor and authorized the newspapers to publish the list of those who would be invited. Among a large number of prominent persons the list included such significant names as Enrique Ramírez y Ramírez, Doctor Matilde Rodríguez Cabo, Doctor of Letters Leopoldo Zea, and Elena Vásquez Gómez.[30] Macrina gained further attention and scandalized the Chamber of Deputies by speaking in defense of the labor leaders active in the numerous strikes and riots which disturbed national calm and economic progress. She caused an uproar in the Chamber by defending the actions of Otón Salazar of the teachers' union and Demetrio Vallejo of the railway union. She criticized police brutality and condemned a peace "enforced with bayonets."[31]

The widespread strikes, numerous outbursts of violence, and student riots which finally forced Ruiz Cortines to use force to restore order, gave added weight to the dilatory tactics of Congress. While the members awaited developments it appeared that the *cardenista* wing of the PRI had determined to assert itself. Cárdenas had undoubtedly hoped to exert considerable influence on the election as a close personal friend of López Mateos whose nomination he unquestionably approved. The *cardenistas,* however, seemed greatly dissatisfied with some of the election results and decided to make their power felt before the new President took office, with the hope of securing concessions in the form of policies and appointments more favorable toward labor and the peasantry. As the struggle erupted with increasing violence Cárdenas conveniently left the country for his famous trip to Europe which included important appearances behind the "Iron Curtain." The old guard in the unions exerted its best efforts to maintain control over organized labor and the professions, while troops enforced order in the streets. Circumstances seemed determined to provide a dramatic stage setting for the inauguration of López Mateos.

The inaugural address of Adolfo López Mateos, delivered December 1, 1958, in the Palace of Fine Arts, contained little of any special comfort either to the *cardenistas* or the *alemanistas,* although he maintained a close personal friendship with Cárdenas and had been the political agent of Alemán. In substance, he promised to continue the policies of Ruiz Cortines and announced a program of moderate reforms which seemed somewhat more liberal than that of his predecessor. The large feminine representation in his audience, similar to that which heard Ruiz Cortines' final presidential address three months earlier, seemed to require some reference to women in politics and toward the end of his speech he congratulated the women for their fine performance in the recent election. He stated that his longstanding confidence in the ability of women to exercise effectively their political rights had been thoroughly vindicated – which sounded somewhat like saying "I told you so" to those who had been fearful that the PRI would not be able to control a majority of the feminine vote. He reasserted his confidence in feminine political activity, insisting that:

> Since I first began my campaign I asserted that in Mexican women and in Mexican youth are to be found those factors which will most shape the future. Once more I call them to their high destinies, that they should put the purity of their thought and the nobility of their character into the task of creating a spirit of abundance in labor and in culture for the well-being of all.[32]

Possibly López Mateos counted upon the support of the women to prevent the PRI from taking what he regarded as too radical a turn. His speech and subsequent events indicated that the effort of the *cardenistas* had been largely a failure.

At the same time that López Mateos was delivering his inaugural address in the Palace of Fine Arts, the morning papers carried statements about his inauguration by prominent women, released for publication by the organization Political Ideals for Women, under the presidency of Señorita Julieta Domínguez. Señora Eva Sámano de López Mateos, the new First Lady, made the most important of these statements which the reader could peruse even before the inaugural address had been delivered. Said doña Eva:

> My husband, Señor Adolfo López Mateos, in the act of

> accepting the candidacy of the PRI to the Presidency of the Republic referred to Mexican women among the other subjects mentioned in his speech: "Upon the women will depend the constant spiritual improvement of Mexicans." The sentiment in these phrases filled me with intimate satisfaction as the wife of the man who thinks thus of the women of the nation. And it gave me the assurance that we will form an important part of the community when reflecting upon the assertion made in this same discourse expressing his longstanding conviction: "The Mexican woman will be a citizen who will work for Mexico: we need distinguish her from the man only to honor her more." When I think of this I hope for dignity and justice for Mexican women in the future.[33]

Had a modern Fernández Lizardi been present he might have remarked somewhat tartly that it seemed as though the First Lady was being inaugurated, whose husband would then be the President. Any such impression of the growing importance of women in Mexican politics would, however, undoubtedly be an exaggeration.

The new President's need of all the support he could muster, as his administration opened under very difficult circumstances, and the novelty of feminine participation in a presidential election, all conspired to give an exaggerated impression of the influence of women in Mexican politics. Even in countries where women have participated in politics much longer than in Mexico they usually have not exercised decisive political power. In the United States, for example, which has always regarded itself as a leader in feminine freedom and equality, the political record of women has not been impressive when compared with masculine political activity and power. The women of the United States have enjoyed full political rights in national politics since 1920, a period of almost 40 years, yet in 1956 only 15 women won election among 435 members of the House of Representatives of the United States Congress and in 1958 the Senate had only one feminine member. A total of only 65 women, 9 in the Senate and 56 in the House, have served in the Congress of the United States in its entire history, beginning with the first woman member in 1916 down to 1960.[34] Many of the states had a few feminine members in the state legislatures in 1958. Vermont, with the largest number, had

50 women among 246 members; New Hampshire, 48 among 400; and Connecticut, 46 among 279. A few women have served as state governors, but in 1958 men held all the state governorships and in only 19 of the 48 states did women hold state-wide elective posts, with a total of only 30 women among several hundred such officeholders.[35]

No important measure in recent United States politics has owed its triumph so clearly to feminine support as to be unquestionably a "woman suffrage" measure, although social security and welfare legislation doubtless owe some of their political strength to the women voters as do measures to promote peaceful settlement of international disputes. It has often been asserted, for example, that the feminine vote elected Dwight Eisenhower to the presidency in 1952 because he promised to end the Korean conflict, and again in 1956 because he promised to keep the United States out of war. In 1952, according to the Gallup Poll, some 17,600,000 women voted for Eisenhower and 12,700,000 women for Stevenson, while the masculine vote for Eisenhower was 16,300,000 as opposed to 14,600,000 for Stevenson. Expressed in percentages, 52.7 per cent of the men and 58.1 per cent of the women voted for Eisenhower. In this election, however, Eisenhower won in 12 states which had a total electoral vote of 123, by a margin of almost or more than two to one. For the feminine vote, counted separately, to have made any difference in the electoral vote of these states it would be necessary to assume that more women than men voted and that all of them cast their ballots for Republican electors. With an over-all masculine majority of 52.7 per cent the feminine vote would have had to be highly concentrated in states with large electoral votes to have made any difference in the outcome of the election. In 1956 the popular vote for Eisenhower was approximately a two to one majority in 18 states which had a total electoral vote of 271.[36] This makes it very doubtful in 1952 and most unlikely in 1956 that Eisenhower would have been defeated if not a single feminine vote had been cast, although the voting women undoubtedly helped to account for the size of the Eisenhower majority.

Most likely a detailed statistical analysis of feminine political behavior in the United States, like that in any country where women have enjoyed political rights for any significant period of

time, would reveal a pattern similar to "The Political Role of Women" traced by Maurice Duverger for UNESCO in 1955.[37] In this report on the political activities of women in Norway, Germany, France, and Yugoslavia he found, for example, that a larger proportion of women than men abstain from voting. The figures available varied considerably from place to place and from time to time, but on the average some 5 per cent to 10 per cent more women than men failed to vote. The statistics showed a smaller difference in the percentage of masculine and feminine voters in the urban areas and a larger proportion of women staying at home from the polls in the rural areas. The percentage of feminine voters exceeded that of the masculine voters only immediately after a war when feminine dissatisfaction with the things which affected women most deeply reached a peak and when circumstances discouraged or prevented many of the masculine voters from participating in elections.[38]

The statistics gathered by Duverger proved that the highest proportion of feminine voting came after age 50, that a greater proportion of women in the professions voted than those in other occupations, and that married women tend to vote as their husbands do. Consequently any differences in masculine and feminine voting according to programs or political issues must be accounted for mainly by the vote of the single women – that is, unmarried, divorced, or widowed. Calculated on the basis of political parties from radical to conservative, the percentage of the feminine vote began to equal that of men for the moderate parties and to exceed that of men for the conservative and traditional parties. Checked by religious affiliation, Roman Catholic women registered a conservative preference about twice as often as Protestant women, while according to amount of education the less educated women showed a clear tendency toward conservatism. Women, by a clear but small margin, let their voting be more influenced by personalities than did the men.[39]

Professor Duverger noted that women played an even smaller part in active political leadership than in voting.

> One general feature of women's direct part in political leadership stands out – its extreme smallness. While, in elections, the proportion of women voting is smaller than that of the men, the gap between the two is very narrow and the

> equality of the sexes may be regarded as practically achieved. On the other hand, the proportion of women playing a real part in political leadership is ridiculously small. In the overwhelming majority of cases, men continue to be elected as ministers, members of parliament, high-ranking civil servants, leaders of political parties and of most pressure groups. There are hardly any women in the bodies which make political decisions and direct the State. They are able to exert only indirect pressure on them, either through the elections or through certain special pressure groups, such as women's associations. In this matter, then, the equality of the sexes has certainly not been achieved, and indeed, great inequality still exists.[40]

Women provided only 16 per cent of the candidates for the parliamentary elections in Norway in 1949. In France, women furnished 13 per cent of the candidates for the National Assembly in 1946 and 9 per cent in 1951. Germany showed a figure of 8.9 per cent feminine candidates in the 1949 Bundestag elections and a figure of 8.5 in the 1953 elections. Mexico displayed a somewhat smaller proportion in the 1958 congressional elections in which women accounted for 5.56 per cent of the candidates. Professor Duverger's study also revealed that women candidates generally have a smaller chance of winning elections than do men and therefore a considerably smaller number of feminine candidates, in proportion to the total number running for office, actually serve in the national assemblies.

> It is rare that the proportion of women in parliament is higher than 5 per cent and the figure for local bodies is even smaller. The position is no better in the traditionally "feminist" countries, and, indeed, appears worse in some of them. It is curious to find, for example, that the United States of America has one of the lowest percentages of women members of parliament, i.e., 2 per cent.[41]

In Mexico the 1958 election gave eight women seats among 162 members of Congress, or a percentage figure of 4.94.

The communist parties and the socialist and Christian center parties, in the countries studied by Duverger, showed a much greater willingness to nominate women candidates than the right-wing nationalist or conservative parties. This seems to have been borne out also in Mexican politics because the PNM and the PARM have

nominated only one woman candidate to Congress, while the PRI, PAN, and PP have presented a creditable number of feminine candidates. Duverger found that once in the national assemblies the women demonstrated a marked preference for concentrating their efforts on measures dealing with public health, public education, youth, old age and social security, the family, and women's rights. The willingness of women members to participate in debates and serve on committees declined visibly when the measures dealt with public finance, agriculture, constitutional questions, national defense, trade, commerce, and transportation.[42] Both the masculine and feminine members of the legislative bodies apparently considered these latter measures subjects about which the women had neither great interest nor extensive knowledge. It is a safe guess, without adequate data, that women members of Congress in the United States and in Mexico would show a similar concentration of interest. The political parties covered in the UNESCO report demonstrated a definite aversion to granting women an autonomous feminine organization within the party – this is true also in party organization both in the United States and in Mexico. Duverger likewise documented adequately the general belief of many observers that women played a relatively minor role in lobbying and pressure group activities.[43]

The UNESCO report also bore out the frequently repeated observation that women elected to office, or those participating in political leadership in other ways, do not represent the general feminine population of the country. Whereas housewives constitute a majority of the feminine population, only a very small proportion have the time, interest, or opportunity to assume positions of leadership in politics, while the professional women, who make up only a small proportion of the feminine population, play an overwhelmingly large role in feminine political leadership.[44] A similar political advantage in favor of the professions, particularly in the case of lawyers, would doubtless be found in an analysis of political leadership in the male population, though probably not to such an overwhelming degree. The predominance of professional titles among the women mentioned in these pages, specifically lawyers, doctors, school teachers, labor union officials, and political party workers, indicates that professional women also dominate the feminine political scene in Mexico. The Mexican census of 1950,

however, showed only 100,000 women in the professions among some 10 million women, 18 years of age or over, who, according to the census, constituted 54 per cent of the adult population. A small elite among these 100,000 professional women has furnished the leadership for the 10 million of whom 6,500,000 were counted as laboring and farm women and some 3 million as housewives.[45]

Finally, in his "General Conclusions," Professor Duverger took due note that economic competition and rivalry for political power play an important part in assigning a minor political role to women and that the discrimination against women tends to increase as the importance of the rewards – and hence the intensity of the political conflict – increases. He asserted his belief that in politics no such thing can exist as a naturally inferior sex, but admits that women themselves generally have accepted the tradition and the practice of masculine leadership in politics.

> The small part played by women in politics merely reflects and results from the secondary place to which they are still assigned by the customs and attitudes of our society and which their education and training tend to make them accept as the natural order of things. Purely political reforms are effective here only so far as they tend gradually to modify this situation, to counteract the effects of habit and tradition, to help women to free themselves from them, and to awaken them to a sense of their own independence. From this point of view, woman's suffrage is probably a most important reform; if its short-term political results are small, its long-term educational value seems to be great.[46]

These conclusions, derived by Professor Duverger from the study of feminine political experience in four European countries, can doubtless be applied to Mexico also. Woman suffrage, in its long-term consequences, may turn out to be one of the most important reforms in recent Mexican history, but for the moment feminine politics seems to be safely controlled by President López Mateos and the PRI which, with its watered down "revolutionary program" appears to be the nearest thing to clearly middle-class politics in Latin America today.

Unquestionably there are more opportunities for women in Mexico than ever before and unquestionably woman suffrage has played and will continue to play a part in expanding the opportuni-

ties available to Mexican women. Mexico has a very creditable number of women in the professions, in public administration, in the national Congress, the state legislatures, and town councils, and for the first time a woman in an important ministerial post: Señora Amalia de Castillo Ledón, named by López Mateos to the post of Undersecretary for Cultural Affairs in the Ministry of Education. But these valiant, educated, and politically responsible women represent a very small portion of the population; and in Mexico the tradition of masculine superiority, in politics as in other important activities, has always been strong. Mexico likewise is a country where traditions die slowly. Among these traditions, that of Church influence and, at times, dominance in politics looms large in Mexican history, much of which reads like the history of a theocracy. The conservative bias of Roman Catholic women in politics, marked by Professor Duverger, when viewed in the light of Mexico's theocratic tradition, adds weight to the anxiety with which thoughtful Mexicans speculate about their country's political future.

The census of 1950 showed that more than 9,500,000 of Mexico's 10 million adult women professed the Roman Catholic faith, which left fewer than 500,000 women for all other faiths including those who professed no religion at all, and that slightly over half of Mexico's feminine 10 million could not read or write. To some Mexican observers this great mass of illiterate or semiliterate Catholic women presents a constant potential for strong and reactionary clerical interference in politics. After examining these statistics Elena Manzanera del Campo remarked, "The influence which the clergy might come to exercise over the opinions of women could have lamentable consequences for our country because it would mean reaction in its institutions."[47] What would happen in Mexico if demagogues such as Perón and Eva Perón should arise in some crisis period determined to undo Mexico's political and social reforms and reverse its Revolution? Vicente Fuentes Díaz also speculated on this subject:

> I suggested with reference to the election of 1955 that women under the influence of the clergy might constitute a serious peril to democratic institutions and might incline the electoral balance in favor of some counterrevolutionary candidate in 1958.
>
> This peril exists and will continue to exist in all political

campaigns if those parties that call themselves democratic do not organize and politically educate the women.[48]

These facts and opinions help to explain why some Mexicans had misgivings over the appointment in November, 1958, of the Archbishop of Guadalajara, José Garibi y Rivera, as Mexico's first Cardinal. They regarded the elevation of a Mexican to the College of Cardinals as the Vatican's reward to Mexico for progressively relaxing revolutionary restraints against the Church and wondered if this could also mark a bid by the Church to influence the political behavior of Mexican women, newly endowed with the right to vote. When Mexicans read in the papers that the Cardinal had held open conferences with the leaders of the *Sinarquista* Union they doubtless felt that their fears had been justified. Thus the granting of full political rights to women has helped to emphasize the need, already felt by many Mexican politicians, to improve public education, to improve the PRI organization and intensify its efforts, particularly its feminine activities. A carefully planned party reorganization in the direction of greater decentralization of party machinery and power could inspire a healthy growth in popular political consciousness and result in a most desirable increase in party sensitivity to the needs and wishes of the Mexican people. If woman suffrage in Mexico could contribute to such an improvement in Mexican politics all those who participated in the realization of this reform would doubtless feel their efforts more than justified.

Notes

Chapter 1

1. María Elena Manzanera del Campo, *La igualdad de derechos políticos* (México, D.F., 1953), p. 143.
2. Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México. El porfiriato* (México, D.F., 1957), pp. 370, 414-415.
3. Ernest Gruening, *Mexico and Its Heritage* (New York, 1928), pp. 628-629.
4. Venustiano Carranza, *Adiciones al Plan de Guadalupe y decretos dictados conforme a las mismas* (Vera Cruz, 1915), pp. 1-13; J. Lloyd Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1934), p. 465.
5. Artemisa Sáenz Royo, *Historia político-social cultural del movimiento femenino en México, 1914-1950* (México, D.F., 1954), p. 48.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 49-51, 88-89; *Pan American Union Bulletin*, XLII (Jan., 1916), 147-148.

Chapter 2

1. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno provisional de la República Mexicana*, Sept. 22, 1916; Ward M. Morton, "The Mexican Constitutional Congress of 1916-1917," *Southwestern Social Science Quarterly*, XXXIII, i (June, 1953), 7-27.
2. Artemisa Sáenz Royo, *Historia político-social cultural del movimiento femenino en México, 1914-1950*, pp. 51-52.
3. Félix F. Palavicini, *Historia de la constitución de 1917*, I (México, D.F., 1939), 172-173.
4. *Diario de los debates del Congreso constituyente de 1916-1917*, II (México, D.F., 1917), 710.
5. *Ibid.*, II, 711-712; Palavicini, *op. cit.*, II, 98.
6. *Diario de debates del Congreso constituyente*, II, 712-847.
7. *Ibid.;* Juan de Dios Bojórquez, *Crónica del constituyente* (México, D.F., 1938); Luis Melgarejo Randolf and J. Fernández Rojas, *Reseña histórica del Congreso constituyente de 1916 y 1917* (México, D.F., 1917); Palavicini, *op. cit.*
8. The living members of the Constitutional Congress later formed the "Association of the Constitution-makers of 1916-1917" and devoted some of their meetings to arguments about the framing of the Constitution and their real intentions during its drafting.
9. *Ley de relaciones familiares*, April 12, 1917; Lillian Estelle Fisher, "Influence of the Present Mexican Revolution upon the Status of Mexican Women," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XXII (Feb., 1942), 212-213.
10. *Ley electoral de poderes federales*, June 1, 1918 (republished in pamphlet form, México, D.F., 1932), pp. 16-17.

11. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 215; Ernest Gruening, *Mexico and Its Heritage*, p. 629; *Pan American Union Bulletin*, L (Jan., 1920), 114; Sáenz Royo, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-41, 90; *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de diputados del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 45, p. 15.

12. Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-225; *Pan American Union Bulletin*, LVI (June, 1923), 580-630; LVII (Aug., 1923), 211.

13. Plutarco Elias Calles, *Mexico Before the World* (New York, 1927), p. 112.

14. Sáenz Royo, *op. cit.*, p. 40; Alfonso Taracena, *Mi vida en el vértigo de la revolución* (México, D.F., 1936), pp. 548-549. The San Luis Potosí law disqualified women members of religious associations and women under their care from voting or running for office. *Pan American Union Bulletin*, LVI (March, 1923), 309.

15. *Ley electoral de poderes federales*, June 1, 1918, Articles 37 and 41.

16. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Informe de la comisión interamericana de mujeres a la novena conferencia internacional americana sobre derechos civiles y políticos de la mujer* (Washington, D.C., 1948), p. 65; *Constitución política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, con sus adiciones y reformas* (México, D.F., 1936).

17. *Semanario judicial de la federación*, Quinta Época, Dec. 15, 1920, Tomo VII, pp. 1468-1470.

In 1936 the court clarified its viewpoint still further in the case of José G. Huerta. "The right to discharge the post of deputy of the national Congress is a political right. Consequently *Amparo* may not be claimed against a legislative body which denies this right. . . . This denial does not imply the loss of any legal or constitutional right and therefore is not a justiciable question." *Ibid.*, Jan. 4, 1936, Tomo XLVII, pp. 33-35.

In 1944 when Aquiles Elorduy appealed for *Amparo* alleging violation of the right of petition by an electoral college decision of the deputies his claim met with no better success. The court said: "When he petitioned the Chamber of Deputies of the Congress of the Union in its capacity as an electoral college to disallow the election in the First District of Aguascalientes there can be no doubt he was exercising a political and not a legal right." *Ibid.*, March 30, 1944, Tomo LXXIX, Núm. 27, pp. 6739-6744.

18. Antonio Ponce Lagos, *Historia de las reformas a los artículos 34 y 115 constitucionales, que conceden la ciudadanía la mujer mexicana* (México, D.F., 1954), pp. 319-320; *Pan American Union Bulletin*, LIX (Aug., 1925), 842-843.

19. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Informe a la novena conferencia sobre derechos de la mujer*, p. 65.

20. J. Lloyd Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America*, p. 494.

21. Margarita Robles de Mendoza, *La evolución de la mujer en México* (México, D.F., 1931), p. 84.

22. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, Jan. 24, 1928.

23. Alfonso Méndez Barraza, *Los partidos políticos en México* (México, D.F., 1949), p. 42; Vicente Fuentes Díaz, *Los partidos políticos en México*, II (México, D.F., 1956), 53-58.

24. Partido Nacional Revolucionario, *La democracia social en México, historia de la convención nacional revolucionaria, constitución del Partido Nacional Revolucionario, sucesión presidencial de 1929* (México, D.F., 1929), pp. 17-32, 34, 62, 74; Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

25. *Pan American Union Bulletin*, LXIV (Oct., 1930), 1078.

26. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
27. Robles de Mendoza, *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61.
28. *Pan American Union Bulletin*, LXV (Jan., 1931), 105.
29. Verna Carleton Millan, *Mexico Reborn* (Boston, 1939), pp. 166-167; Sáenz Royo, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

CHAPTER 3

1. Verna Carleton Millan, *Mexico Reborn*, pp. 76-79; Emilio Portes Gil, *Quince años de política mexicana* (México, D.F., 1954), p. 527.
2. Josephus Daniels, *Shirt-Sleeve Diplomat* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1947), pp. 57-58; Vicente Fuentes Díaz, *Los partidos políticos en México, II*, 58; Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-79.
3. Partido Nacional Revolucionario, *Plan sexenal* (México, D.F., 1934).
4. Cárdenas' speech is bound with the plan. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
5. José Mijares Palencia, *El gobierno mexicano, su organización y funcionamiento* (México, D.F., 1936), pp. 335-336; Artemisa Sáenz Royo, *Historia político-social cultural del movimiento femenino en México, 1914-1950*, pp. 91-92.
6. Partido Nacional Revolucionario, *La redención de la mujer mexicana por el ejido* (México, D.F., 1934).
7. Lillian Estelle Fisher, "Influence of the Present Mexican Revolution upon the Status of Mexican Women," p. 219; Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-169.
8. Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218; Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-168; Beatrice Newhall, "Woman Suffrage in the Americas," *Pan American Union Bulletin*, LXX (May, 1936), 426-427; *Pan American Union Bulletin*, LXXIV (March, 1940), 165.
9. Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-166.
10. Portes Gil, *op. cit.*, p. 513.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 517.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 528.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 526.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 527-528.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 526.
16. Daniels, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-61; Millan, *op. cit.*, p. 96; Henry Bamford Parkes, *A History of Mexico* (Boston, 1950), pp. 400-401; Portes Gil, *op. cit.*, pp. 519-520.
17. *Informe rendido el día de 1° de septiembre de 1935 por el c. presidente de la república general de división Lázaro Cárdenas, al h. congreso de la unión* (México, D.F., 1935), pp. 57-58.
18. Mijares Palencia, *op. cit.*, pp. 335-336.
19. Portes Gil, *op. cit.*, pp. 531-532.
20. *Constitución política del estado libre y soberano de Durango* (Durango, 1948); *Constitución política del estado libre y soberano de Guanajuato, con reformas hasta 1951* (Guanajuato, 1951); *Constitución política del estado libre y soberano de Puebla* (Puebla, 1947); Fisher, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-219; Newhall, *op. cit.*, p. 427.
21. Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-103; Parkes, *op. cit.*, p. 401.
22. Daniels, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-64; Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-98, 106; Vicente Lombardo Toledano, "The Labor Movement," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, CCVIII (March, 1940), p. 52.

23. Daniels, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-65; Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-107.

24. *The Annual Register, for the year 1933* (London, 1934), pp. 238-241; Frank E. Manuel, *The Politics of Modern Spain* (New York, 1938), pp. 71, 120-127.

25. Antonio Luna Arroyo, *La mujer mexicana en la lucha social* (México, D.F., 1936), p. 7.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

27. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 23-24.

33. Portes Gil, *op. cit.*, pp. 533-548.

34. Partido de la Revolución Mexicana, *El Nacional*, Sept. 15, 1938; Portes Gil, *op. cit.*, pp. 548-553.

35. Clara Luna Morales, *El sufragio femenino en México* (México, D.F., 1947), p. 26.

36. Joseph Freeman, Luis Chávez Orozco, Enrique Gutmann, *Lázaro Cárdenas visto por 3 hombres* (México, D.F., 1937), p. 21.

37. *New York Times*, April 4 and 12, 1937.

38. Millan, *op. cit.*, p. 167; *New York Times*, April 4, 1937; *El Universal, el gran diario de México*, July 26 and Aug. 5, 1937.

39. *New York Times*, Aug. 28 and Sept. 12, 1937.

40. Sáenz Royo, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

41. *New York Times*, Sept. 12, 1937.

42. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de diputados del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, XXXVII Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 7, p. 9.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

44. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de senadores del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, XXXVII Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 13, p. 9.

45. Luna Morales, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-44; *El Universal*, Dec. 8, 10, 15, 18, 1937.

46. *Diario de debates de la Cámara de senadores*, Núm. 18, pp. 56-57.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 60.

48. *Ibid.*

49. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

51. *Ibid.*, *El Universal*, Dec. 22, 1937; Luna Morales, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

52. *Constitución política del estado libre y soberano de Michoacán de Ocampo, 1917, con reformas hasta 1955* (Morelia, 1955).

53. *Diario de debates de la Cámara de diputados*, Núm. 38, pp. 3-4; *El Universal*, Dec. 10, 15, 18, 1937.

54. Fuentes Díaz, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-70; William P. Tucker, *The Mexican Government Today* (Minneapolis, 1957), pp. 43, 49-50, 58; *El Universal*, Dec. 19, 1937.

55. Partido de la Revolución Mexicana, *Pacto constitutivo, declaración de principios, programa y estatutos* (México, D.F., 1938), p. 10.

56. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

57. *Diario oficial, órgano oficial del gobierno constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, Sept. 27, 1938; Luna Morales, *op. cit.*, p. 44; *El Nacional*, July 6, 1938; *New York Times*, July 8, 1938.

58. *Informe que rinde al H. Congreso de la union el C. Presidente Lázaro Cárdenas, sobre su gestión de septiembre de 1937 a agosto de 1938* (México, D.F., 1938), p. 31.
59. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-46.
60. *El Nacional*, Sept. 15, 23, 24, 26 and Oct. 4, 1938.
61. *El Nacional*, Sept. 24, 1938.
62. Luna Morales, *op. cit.*, p. 44; *El Nacional*, Sept. 26, and Oct. 4, 1938.
63. Luis Quintanilla, *A Latin American Speaks* (New York, 1943), p. 164.
64. *New York Times*, May 28, 1939.

Chapter 4

1. Verna Carleton Millan, *Mexico Reborn*, p. 164.
2. Lillian Estelle Fisher, "Influence of the Present Mexican Revolution upon the Status of Mexican Women," p. 222; Alfonso Méndez Barraza, *Los partidos políticos en México*, pp. 59-61; Ana Salado Álvarez, *Misión de la mujer en la vida nacional, una orientación, un llamamiento, una exigencia, lo que ví en Acción Nacional* (México, D.F., 1939); William W. Pierson and Federico G. Gil, *Governments of Latin America* (New York, 1957), pp. 334-335; William P. Tucker, *The Mexican Government Today*, pp. 43-44; Nathan L. Whetten, *Rural Mexico* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 484-522.
3. *Constitución política de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, con sus adiciones y reformas*, 1936.
4. Millan, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-233; Henry Bamford Parkes, "Political Leadership in Mexico," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, CCVIII (March, 1940), 20.
5. *Discursos pronunciados por el candidato nacional general de división Manuel Ávila Camacho durante la etapa preelectoral de su campaña, en distintos lugares del país* (México, D.F., 1939), p. 14.
6. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de diputados del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 45, p. 10.
7. Party of the Mexican Revolution, *The Second Six Year Plan, 1941-1946* (México, D.F., 1940), pp. 9-13, 21-23, 27; *Tiempo, semanario de la vida y la verdad* (sold in the United States as *Hispanoamericano)*, XXII (Jan. 2, 1953), 5.
8. *Informe que rinde al H. Congreso de la unión el C. Presidente de la República, general Lázaro Cárdenas, por su gestión de gobierno realizada del l de septiembre de 1938 al 31 de agosto de 1939* (México, D.F., 1939), p. 37; William C. Townsend, *Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexican Democrat* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1952), pp. 334-335.
9. *Informe que rinde por su gobierno del 1 de septiembre de 1938 al 31 de agosto de 1939*, pp. 53-54.
10. Party of the Mexican Revolution, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 50, 123, 124; *New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1939.
11. *New York Times*, Mar. 25, 1940.
12. Henry Bamford Parkes, *A History of Mexico*, pp. 411-412.
13. Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 220-221.
15. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Informe de la Comisión interamericana de mujeres a la novena conferencia internacional americana sobre derechos civiles y políticos de la mujer*, pp. 36-78.

16. Parkes, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-413.
17. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de senadores del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* XXXVII Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 18, p. 62.
18. Whetten, *op. cit.*, pp. 541-542.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 543.
20. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno constitutional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* Nov. 13, 1944; Vicente Fuentes Díaz, *Los partidos políticos en México,* II, 71-72.

Chapter 5

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2. Vícente Fuentes Díaz, *Los partidos políticos en México,* II, 73; Artemisa Sáenz Royo, *Historia político-social cultural del movimiento femenino en México, 1914-1950,* p. 84.
3. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* Jan. 7, 1946; Fuentes Díaz, *op. cit.*, II, p. 72.
4. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de diputados del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* XXXIX Legis., Año III, Tomo I, Núm. 46, p. 4.
5. Audrey Adele Georgi, "Viva las Mujeres!", *Independent Woman,* XXVI, 4 (April, 1947), 91-92.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 92; Sáenz Royo, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-84, 101-104, 106-110.
7. Henry Bamford Parkes, *A History of Mexico,* pp. 417-418; *Diario de debates de la Cámara de diputados,* XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 45, pp. 10-22.
8. Georgi, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
9. *Diario de debates de la Cámara de diputados,* XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 33, p. 4.
10. Clara Luna Morales, *El sufragio femenino en México,* p. 45.
11. *Diario de debates de la Cámara de diputados,* XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 40, p. 4, Núm. 45, p. 11, Núm. 50, p. 30; Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Informe de la Comisión interamericana de mujeres a la novena Conferencia internacional americana sobre derechos civiles y políticos de la mujer,* p. 65.
12. *Diario de debates de la Cámara de diputados,* XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 45, p. 10.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-19.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-22.
19. *Ibid.*, Núm. 47, pp. 2-3.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
21. *Ibid.*, Núm. 50, p. 30; *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de senadores del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 47, p. 17; *New York Times,* Jan. 2, 1947.
22. Georgi, *op. cit.*, p. 91; Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Informe a la novena conferencia sobre derechos de la mujer,* p. 66; *New York Times,* Feb. 23, 1947.

23. *Tiempo, semanario de la vida y la verdad* (sold in the United States as *Hispanoamericano),* XV, 391 (Oct. 28, 1949), iv-vi; 381 (Aug. 19, 1949), iii.
24. *Ibid.,* XIV, 346 (Dec. 17, 1948), pp. i-iii.
25. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Informe a la novena conferencia sobre derechos de la mujer,* p. 244; *New York Times,* April 5, 1950.
26. *Tiempo,* XIV, 344 (Dec. 3, 1948), xvi-xix; 357 (March 4, 1949), x-xi.
27. Méndez Barraza, *op. cit.,* p. 56.
28. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno constitutional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* Feb. 21, 1949.
29. *Diario de debates de la Cámara de senadores,* XLI Legis., Año II, Tomo III, Núm. 25, p. 10; Año III, Tomo III, Núm. 12, pp. 5-6; Núm. 13, pp. 3-7; Núm. 18, pp. 4-34; Núm. 19, p. 21; Núm. 20, pp. 2-17.

Chapter 6

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2. *Ibid.*
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4. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* p. 20.
5. Artemisa Sáenz Royo, *Historia político-social cultural del movimiento femenino en México,* pp. 15-16.
6. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* p. 20; *New York Times,* April 9, 1952; Partido Revolucionario Institucional, *El gobierno de Ruiz Cortines, fe en el ideal, realizaciones fecundas* (México, D.F., 1957), pp. 51-52.
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9. *La Nación al servicio de México,* June 2, 1952; *Tiempo,* XXI, 527 (June 6, 1952), 8.
10. William W. Pierson and Federico G. Gil, *Governments of Latin America,* p. 335; Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* p. 25; Tucker, *op. cit.,* p. 63.
11. *La Nación,* June 2, 1952.
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13. *El Universal,* Dec. 2, 1952.
14. *Ibid.,* Dec. 10, 1952.
15. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Derechos políticos de la mujer de América 1953-1956* (Washington, D. C., 1956), pp. 69-70.
16. *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de diputados del Congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* XL Legis., Año I, Tomo I, Núm. 33, p. 4.
17. *El Universal,* Dec. 10, 1952.
18. *Ibid.;* Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* pp. 35-36.
19. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* p. 37. Señor Ponce Lagos, who was a member of the XLII Congress and participated in the debates, has reproduced in full in his book the debates and proceedings on woman suffrage from the *Diario de los debates de la Cámara de Diputados* and from the *Diario de los debates*

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21. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* pp. 51-55; *El Universal,* Dec. 18, 1952.
22. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* pp. 65-66.
23. *Ibid.,* pp. 69, 75, 79-83, 95-97.
24. *Ibid.,* p. 69.
25. *Ibid.,* pp. 111-112.
26. *Ibid.,* p. 92.
27. *Ibid.,* p. 124.
28. *Ibid.,* p. 125.
29. *Ibid.,* pp. 126-127.
30. *Ibid.,* p. 104.
31. *Ibid.,* p. 105.
32. *Ibid.,* pp. 135-136; *New York Times,* Dec. 23, 1952; *Tiempo,* XXII, 557 (Jan. 2, 1953), 4-5.
33. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* pp. 153-154.
34. *Ibid.,* pp. 154-156, 161-163; Alfonso Méndez Barraza, *Los partidos políticos en México,* pp. 59, 62-63; *Tiempo,* XXII, 557 (Jan. 2, 1953), 5.
35. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* pp. 175-176.
36. *Ibid.,* pp. 200-201.
37. *Ibid.,* pp. 209-210; *Tiempo,* XXII, 557 (Jan. 2, 1953), 4-5.
38. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* pp. 220-221.
39. *Hoy,* Jan. 17, 1953.
40. *Tiempo,* XXII, 562 (Feb. 6, 1953), 4-5.
41. *Ibid.*
42. *Ibid.,* p. 5.
43. *Ibid.,* 563 (Feb. 13, 1953), 4.
44. *Ibid.,* XXIII, 592 (Sept. 7, 1953), 30.
45. *Ibid.,* p. 31.
46. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Boletín extraordinario de la novena asamblea* (Washington, D.C., 1954), pp. 48-49.
47. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* p. 213.
48. Isabel Farfán Cano, "Amalia Castillo Ledón," *Revista de Revistas, el semanario nacional* (March 1, 1953), pp. 40-43.
49. Ponce Lagos, *op. cit.,* pp. 219-228, 231-301.
50. *Ibid.,* pp. 253-254.
51. *Ibid.,* pp. 275-276.
52. *Ibid.,* p. 281.
53. *Ibid.,* pp. 305-306.
54. *Ibid.,* pp. 214, 222.
55. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* Oct. 17, 1953.
56. *Ibid.,* Jan. 7, 1954.
57. Audrey Adele Georgi, "Viva las Mujeres!", *Independent Woman,* XXVI, 4 (April, 1947), 92.
58. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Derechos políticos de la mujer de América,* pp. 111-113.

CHAPTER 7

1. Consuelo C. de Rodríguez, Directora de Acción Feminil del PRI, Mexicali, Baja California Norte, Letter to the Author, Oct. 7, 1959; *Tiempo, semanario de la vida y la verdad* (sold in the United States as *Hispano-americano),* XXV, 638 (July 26, 1954), 7; 643 (Aug. 30), 15; 645 (Sept. 13), 10-11.
2. *Ibid.,* 643 (Aug. 30, 1954), 15.
3. *Ibid.,* 645 (Sept. 13, 1954), 11.
4. *Ibid.,* 662 (Jan. 10, 1955), 5; 663 (Jan. 17), 5-6.
5. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos,* Jan. 7, 1954.
6. *Ibid.,* April 29, 1955.
7. *Ibid.,* March 1, 1954.
8. *Ibid.,* April 29 and 30, 1955; Inter-American Commission of Women, *News Bulletin,* 11 (Dec., 1956), 43-44.
9. Señora Amalia de Castillo Ledón, Letter to the Author, Sept. 27, 1958; Inter-American Commission of Women, *News Bulletin,* 11 (Dec., 1956), 44-45.
10. *Hispanic American Report, a monthly report on developments in Spain, Portugal, and Latin America,* X, 3 (March, 1957), 117; 4 (April, 1957), 174.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Ibid.,* 174-175.
14. *El Universal, el gran diario de México,* July 7, 1958; *Tiempo,* XXXI, 798 (Aug. 19, 1957), 13-14.
15. *Ibid.,* 795 (July 29, 1957), 11; 796 (Aug. 5, 1957), 6; XXXII, 822 (Feb. 3, 1958), 20; *El Universal,* Feb. 23, March 15, April 7, July 1, 1958; Frank R. Brandenburg, "Political Parties and Elections," in *Government and Politics in Latin America,* Harold E. Davis (ed.) (New York, 1958), p. 206.
16. *Tiempo,* XXXI, 795 (July 29, 1957), 11; 796 (Aug. 5), 6.
17. *Hispanic American Report,* X, 8 (Aug., 1957), 342.
18. *Tiempo,* XXXI, 801 (Sept. 9, 1957), 12.
19. *Ibid.,* 802 (Sept. 16, 1957), 7.
20. *Hispanic American Report,* X, 9 (Sept., 1957), 454-455.
21. *Ibid., X,* 11 (Nov., 1957), 576-577; *Campaña presidencial de Adolfo López Mateos, documentos,* I (México, D.F., 1958), xii-xx.
22. *Tiempo,* XXXII, 812 (Nov. 25, 1957), 10.
23. *Hispanic American Report,* X, 11 (Nov. 1957), 577; *Campaña presidencial de Adolfo López Mateos,* I (Nov., 1957), xxiii-xxviii.
24. United States, *Congressional Record,* CIV, 30 (Feb. 26, 1958), 2448; *Tiempo,* XXXII, 812 (Nov. 25, 1957), 48.
25. *Campaña presidencial de Adolfo López Mateos,* Vols. 1-7.
26. *El Universal,* Feb. 26, March 14, July 7, 1958.
27. *Ibid.,* Feb. 26, 1958.
28. *Ibid.,* May 31, 1958; *Tiempo,* XXXIII, 840 (June 9, 1958), 7.
29. *Tiempo,* XXXII, 822 (Feb. 3, 1958), 20.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *El Universal,* Feb. 26, 1958.
32. *Ibid.*
33. *Ibid.,* March 10, 1958.
34. *Ibid.,* March 11, 1958.
35. *Ibid.,* March 13, 1958.

36. *Ibid.*, March 26, 1958.
37. *Ibid.*, March 28, 1958.
38. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1958.
39. *Tiempo*, XXXIII, 835 (May 5, 1958), 24.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
41. *Ibid.*, 839 (June 2, 1958), 18.
42. *El Universal*, May 31, 1958; *Tiempo*, XXXIII, 840 (June 9, 1958), 7.
43. *Tiempo*, XXXIII, 841 (June 16, 1958), 34.
44. *El Universal*, Feb. 23 and March 8, 1958.
45. *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1958.
46. *Ibid.*, March 11, 1958.
47. *Ibid.*, March 14 and 15, 1958.
48. *Tiempo*, XXXII, 832 (April 14, 1958), 6.
49. *El Universal*, April 7, 1958.
50. *Ibid.*, June 17, 1958.
51. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1958.
52. *Ibid.*, July 1, 2, and 3, 1958.
53. *Ibid.*, July 7, 1958.
54. *Ibid.*
55. *Tiempo*, XXXIII, 841 (June 16, 1958), 38.
56. *Ibid.*, 844 (July 7, 1958), 28.
57. *El Universal*, July 1, 1958.
58. *Hispanic American Report*, X, 1 (Jan., 1958), 8-9.
59. *Ibid.*, XI, 2 (Feb., 1958), 74; *El Universal*, Feb. 21, 1958; *Diario oficial*, April 26 and 29, 1958.
60. *Diario oficial*, April 26 and 29, 1958; *El Universal*, March 8 and April 4, 1958.
61. *Hispanic American Report*, X, 12 (Dec., 1957), 645-646.
62. The Coordinating Committee of University Professors and Professional People of Mexico published a pamphlet comparing the remarks of López Mateos and Luis H. Álvarez on various subjects, including woman suffrage. *El Universal*, Feb. 21, 1958.
63. *Hispanic American Report*, XI, 1 (Jan., 1958), 9-10; *El Universal*, March 8 and April 13, 1958.
64. *Hispanic American Report*, X, 12 (Dec., 1957), 646; XI, 2 (Feb., 1958), 74; XI, 4 (April, 1958), 191; XI, 5 (May, 1958), 246; *El Universal*, May 28, 1958.
65. *El Universal*, June 16, 1958.
66. *Ibid.*, March 15, 1958.
67. *Ibid.*, March 18, 1958.
68. *Ibid.*, March 22, 1958.
69. *Ibid.*, March 27, 1958; *Hispanic American Report*, XI, (April, 1958), 191.
70. *El Universal*, April 1, 1958; *Diario oficial*, April 29, 1958.
71. *El Universal*, April 1, 1958.
72. *Ibid.*, April 7, 13, and 14, 1958.
73. *Ibid.*, April 11 and May 18, 1958.
74. *Diario oficial*, April 29, 1958; *Mexico y sus funcionarios*, Sergio Sierra Domínguez y Roberto Martínez Barreda (eds.) (México, D.F., 1959), pp. 181, 241, 283, 327.
75. *Diario oficial*, April 29, 1958.
76. *El Universal*, March 9, 1958.

77. *Ibid.*, March 19, 1958.
78. *Ibid.*, May 26, 1958.
79. *Diario oficial*, April 29, 1958; *El Universal*, Sept. 1-10, 1958; *Directorio de la Cámara de diputados del XLIV congreso de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos, 1° septiembre 1958 a 31 de agosto 1961* (México, D.F., 1958), pp. 5-21; Joseph J. Montllor, First Secretary of the American Embassy, México, D.F., Letter to the Author, transmitting information supplied by the Secretary of the Mexican Congress, Sept. 23, 1959.

Since the data kindly transmitted by Mr. Montllor corresponds to that which I compiled from the daily papers and the *Diario oficial*, and to that contained in the *Directorio de la Cámara de diputados del XLIV congreso* . . . I am using it in preference to the data published by the Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Noticiero*, No. 14, July-Dec., 1958, p. 18.

80. *Hispanic American Report*, X, 11 (Nov., 1957), 578; X, 12 (Dec., 1958), 645.
81. *El Universal*, April 14, 1958.
82. *Ibid.*, July 5, 1958.
83. *Hispanic American Report*, X, 8 (Aug., 1957), 342; X, 10 (Oct., 1957), 517; XI, 3 (March, 1958), 135.
84. *El Universal*, May 29 and June 13, 1958.
85. *Ibid.*, June 18, 1958.
86. *Ibid.*, June 27, 1958.
87. *Ibid.*, July 8, 1958.
88. *Novedades, el mejor diario de México*, Aug. 5, 1958.

Chapter 8

1. *Diario oficial, órgano del gobierno constitucional de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*, Jan. 7, 1954.
2. *New York Times*, July 1, 1958.
3. *El Universal, gran diario de México*, May 30, 1958.
4. *Ibid.*, July 4, 1958.
5. *Novedades, el mejor diario de México*, Sept. 11, 1958.
6. *Hispanic American Report, a monthly report on developments in Spain, Portugal, and Latin America*, XI, 7 (July, 1958), 362-363.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 362.
8. *El Universal*, July 7, 1958.
9. *Amarrado*, tied or lassoed; *confeccionado*, cooked up; *congelado*, frozen or suspended; *guillotinado*, guillotined or disapproved; *postulado*, postulate or nominee; *presunto*, presumptive; *quemado*, burned or disposed of; *sacrificiado*, sacrificed.
10. *Novedades*, Aug. 15 and 19, 1958.
11. *Diario oficial*, April 29, 1958; *El Universal*, Sept. 1-10, 1958; Joseph J. Montllor, First Secretary to the American Embassy, Mexico, D.F., Letter to the Author, transmitting information supplied by the Secretary of the Mexican Congress, Sept. 23, 1959.
12. *Novedades*, Aug. 31, 1958.
13. *Ibid.*, Aug. 16, 1958.
14. *Ibid.*, Aug. 31, 1958.
15. *Ibid.*, Aug. 5, 1958.

16. *Ibid.*, Aug. 20 and 22, 1958.
17. *Excelsior, el periódico de la vida nacional,* Aug. 26, 1958.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Novedades,* Aug. 21, 1958.
20. *Ibid.*, Aug. 20, 1958.
21. *Últimas noticias de Excelsior,* Aug. 21, 1958.
22. Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Noticiero,* 14 (June-Dec., 1958), 18.
23. *Novedades,* Sept. 2, 1958.
24. *Ibid.*, Sept. 2 and 3, 1958.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, Sept. 11, 1958.
27. *Tiempo, semanario de la vida y la verdad* (sold in the United States as *Hispanoamericano*), XXXIII, 854 (Sept. 15, 1958), 28-29.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
29. *Hispanic American Report,* XI, 9 (Sept., 1958), 484; *Novedades,* Sept. 7, 1958.
30. *Novedades,* Sept. 8, 1958.
31. *Hispanic American Report,* XI, 9 (Sept., 1958), 484.
32. *El Universal,* Dec. 2, 1958.
33. *Ibid.*, Dec. 1, 1958.
34. Inter-American Commission of Women, *News Bulletin,* 11 (Dec., 1956), 40-41; Comisión Interamericana de Mujeres, *Noticiero,* 14 (July-Dec., 1958), 17; United States, *Congressional Directory,* 86th Cong., 1st sess., pp. 206-230.
35. Republican National Committee, Press Release, Washington, D.C., Aug. 16, 1958; *World Almanac and Book of Facts* (New York, 1959), pp. 68-72.
36. Earl Roger Kruschke, "The Woman Voter, An Analysis Based Upon Personal Interviews," *Annals of American Government,* 1955, pp. 4-5; *World Almanac,* 1959, pp. 587-614; "Did Women Elect Eisenhower?", *United States News and World Report,* XXXIV (May 8, 1953), 45-46.
37. Maurice Duverger, *The Political Role of Women* (Paris, 1955).
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 14-25.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-73.
40. *Ibid.*, pp. 75-76.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 76.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 82-98.
43. *Ibid.*, pp. 103-114.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 84, 91-94.
45. Elena Manzanera del Campo, *La igualdad de derechos políticos,* pp. 111-122.
46. Duverger, *op. cit.*, p. 130.
47. Manzanera del Campo, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
48. Vicente Fuentes Díaz, *Los partidos políticos en México, II,* 78.

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